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Nebuchadnezzar

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NEBUCHADNEZZAR

By the same author

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF TUTANKHAMEN
(crowned by the French Academy)

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ASSYRIAN KING PUTTING OUT THE EYES OF PRISONERS

From Botta, *Monuments de Ninive*

[fro

G. R. TABOUIS

NEBUCHADNEZZAR

with a Preface by

GABRIEL HANOTAUX

of the French Academy

"Babylon hath been a golden cup in the Lord's hand, that made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine; therefore the nations are mad."

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PREFACE

To restore life to one of those people with curly beards and inhuman head-dresses, whom pious legend has made into the dim figures of a grand and bloody past, is no ordinary task. Michelet himself might have quailed before it. However, history can now attempt it, provided that a fair place is left to intuitive imagination.

"Nebuchadnezzar—what a subject!" said the enterprising and studious lady who had already tried her hand on the golden Pharaoh, Tutankhamen. Yes, what a subject!

To cope with it required all the qualifications of this Parisienne, a pupil of the École du Louvre, who had sat at the feet of men like Dussaud and Contenau and had been nurtured in the bosom of politics and history.
—Mme G. R. Tabouis.

The three origins of Mediterranean civilization are found, at the same time, in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, and on the shore of the Red Sea. On the one hand, we have the two civilizations of the rivers and the seasons, those of Egypt and Mesopotamia, both of which owe their luxuriant polytheism, their deep feeling for nature, and their artistic vigour to the fertility of their soil and the stability of a wealth renewed every year; on the other hand, we have the civilization of the desert, the Arabo-Semitic civilization, which derived its austere monotheism and its strong moral belief from the bare, nomadic way of life which compelled it to travel light, unencumbered by worldly goods.

These three civilizations meet round that Napoleon of Chaldæa who caused the writers of our Scriptures to tremble with fear and wonder. He drove back the Egyptian invasion. He destroyed Jerusalem, which he had at first saved. He carried off the obstinate people of Israel into captivity. Then, after reigning, a conqueror now at peace, over Babylon, the city whose very name has come to have a ring of debauchery, after fortifying his huge capital and raising its buildings to the skies, at the height of his power and glory, weary of all human greatness, having extended his conquests to the borders of that Arabia whose sands have swallowed up the glory of so many, he vanishes from the page of history into madness, leaving his Empire to the wretched sons produced by his harem, to collapse in less than thirty years!

This astounding apparition, six hundred years before the coming of Christ, had for witnesses the most interesting actors in sacred history—the prophets. Strong in their faith in the One God, they proclaimed and called upon the Babylonian conqueror as a necessary scourge. They exalted him as the rod of the Lord, and then denounced him, cursed him, foresaw and foretold his fall, and measured his mighty ruin on the ground. They were, to mention only the most famous, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.

Through them, we can look on at one of the most stirring episodes in that age-long drama, the conflict of the three civilizations. Steadily, by a decree of Providence, it moves to the unforeseeable survival of the humblest race of all, the weakest, the poorest in earthly goods—but a race which is sustained to the very end by its faith in the creative unity of the world and the moral law, through which the salvation of mankind will one day be accomplished.

Here, then, is Nebuchadnezzar, the scion of a noble line, the son of a man who has recently destroyed Nineveh. He is the favourite of Marduk, and he has

taken the hand of Bel in his. He commands a people full of life; he has to his hand a military power of which it is written: "A terrible and dreadful nation, whose judgement and dignity proceed from themselves. They march through the breadth of the earth, to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs. Their horses also are swifter than leopards, and are more fierce than the evening wolves; and their horsemen spread themselves, yea, their horsemen come from far; they fly as an eagle that hasteth to devour. They come all of them for violence; their faces are set eagerly as the east wind; and they gather captives as the sand. Yea, he" (the Chaldæan) "scoffeth at kings, and princes are a derision unto him; he derideth every stronghold; for he heapeth up dust, and taketh it. Then shall he sweep by as a wind, and shall pass over, and be guilty, even he whose might is his god" (Habakkuk, i, 6–11).

Victorious, the Attila, the Tamerlane who commanded those terrible bowmen, marching in file at parade-step, delivered the kings whom he conquered to the most frightful tortures. He put out their eyes with his own hand, he pierced their tongue and put a ring in it. He allowed them to live in order that they might, in their darkness, catch some gleam of his glory. He took whole peoples into captivity, packed them in barracks, corrupted them, took their very soul from them, and nourished them for his vengeance, not suspecting that his vengeance was feeding theirs.

Against him, there was Necho, who had restored the royal house of Egypt, had dug the canal which was to divert the Red Sea trade to the Delta, and had followed in the track of the great Pharaohs who had conquered Palestine and Syria in the past. He thought that he was setting out to reconquer the whole of Western Asia, when, on the borders of Egypt, he came up against the forces of the other conqueror.

Between these two was a wretched princeling, Zede-

kiah, the last scion of the house of David, the insignificant king of an insignificant people. They had no resources, no land, no room to expand, cramped among their mountains, owing their very life to a monastic discipline, lost if they broke loose from it and yet, in spite of all the demands and threats of their god, always breaking loose.

But there they were, and in the depths of his faith, which was always wavering and always being punished, the Jew carried with him the Law and the pledge of the future brotherhoods to which mankind stretched supplicating hands from afar. Between the two great adversaries, he hid, he ran to earth, clasping to his bosom the mysterious tables which had been dictated to him. These tables had been found some time before the Great Captivity, and in the reign of Josiah they had been read publicly ; this was the book of the Law dictated by Jehovah—not the Jehovah of Bethel, or the Jehovah of Dan, or the Jehovah of Geba, but simply Jehovah, the One God, without place and without shape.

Now this Law appeared in opposition to the law of blood, conquest, and bondage, the law of the Nechos and Nebuchadnezzars. It was the law of friendship and pity. The King was to be the priest, and his law was to be the Law of Jehovah. He should not exalt his heart above his power, nor set greatness in the possession of chariots, horses, and women, but he should read the Law of God without ceasing, and meditate on it, that he might observe it every day in all points. Even in war, he should not trust in his troops and his own courage ; there, too, he must leave it to Jehovah to guide him. The poor, the widow, the orphan, the slave, and even the stranger in his gates, in memory of the Egyptian bondage, especially enjoyed the divine protection. Any son of Israel who had become the property of a fellow-countryman must be emancipated after six years, and his master must give

him sufficient to enable him to live for some little time (Deuteronomy, xv–xvi). Such was the lamp with the gentle light which the people of Jehovah preserved and the prophets tended.

Jeremiah was present at the siege and the destruction of Jerusalem. He had foretold them and he did not deplore them, for chastisement was necessary. "The Chaldæans, that fight against this city, shall come and set fire on this city, and burn it with the houses on whose roofs they have offered incense unto Baal." But he knew that the affliction was not for ever. "For thus saith the Lord, that after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon, I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. . . . Houses and fields and vineyards shall yet again be bought in this land. . . . Behold, the days come, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and he shall execute judgement and justice in the earth" (Jeremiah, xxii–xxiii). Such was the full cycle—sin, punishment, return, restoration, revelation.

Jeremiah was not only a seer, but a statesman. He saw the permanence of the Egyptian and the impermanence of the Chaldæan. Between the two opposing forces, he chose. From the conflict of the two he expected the salvation of his people; seeing what was to come, even after his death, he entrusted its fortune, not to the Chaldæan bull, but to the Egyptian sphinx.

As he had foretold, so the drama with the three actors would end: the Branch of David would be born, and the Flight into Egypt would be the symbol of His new empire and His lasting conquest. In the struggle of the three civilizations, that of Mesopotamia, that of the Nile, and that of the Red Sea, the union of the two latter would carry the day. Alexandria, the heiress of the Pharaohs and the home of the Septuagint, would be the focus and the breeding-

ground of the new Word. The failure of Nebuchadnezzar, like the failure of Xerxes after him, was the failure of Asia. The way was clear for the Mediterranean to come into its own.

That secret page of the remote annals of mankind can be written now, not only in the light of the Bible narrative, but thanks to the marvellous discoveries of modern knowledge and the revelations and confirmations obtained from the study of the cuneiform libraries. Nebuchadnezzar stands before us, not a myth, but a living man, a Charlemagne or Napoleon. Read this book, even accept some audacities of the imagination. Break the shell and find the kernel. The terrible legend will suddenly grow human before your eyes, and impose itself upon history.

GABRIEL HANOTAUX

of the French Academy.

PROLOGUE

THE FALL OF NINEVEH

It was the year 612 before Christ, and the last scorching days of the month of Ab (July–August) were slowly passing. The vast plain of Mesopotamia lay, flat and low, beneath the weight of the night. By the Tigris, on the far horizon, heavy clouds of smoke mingled with the black sky, into which bursts of sparks soared like fantastic stars. A mighty blaze rose from huge, tumbling walls, and a world of moving shadows was bathed in a blood-red glow. Nineveh was burning.[1]

At the four corners of the horizon, other furnaces had died down to ash, sometimes flaring up in response to the last conflagration of Nineveh. These were the great cities of Assyria—Nisibis, Kalakh, Ashur, Arbela—nothing left but dark, shapeless masses of ruin.

Along the river, whose reddened, stinking waters bore an uninterrupted procession of bloated corpses, the plain was hidden by a multitude of men. There were more than four hundred thousand of them, a surging tide of men and weapons and clothes of every variety. On horse, on foot, riding on chariots, perched on the top of war-engines, all had gathered to the prey, all who envied the power of Nineveh, all who had suffered under her tyranny, all who coveted her wealth, and they caused the smoke of her burning to rise into the sky like that of a great sacrifice.

Among these turbulent hordes, snarling and howling for blood, we see three peoples stand out as the leaders in the victorious war which has avenged a martyrdom of fifteen hundred years. There are the

Babylonians, splendid spearmen, wearing conical helmets and tunics imbricated with metal scales. There are the Scythians, grim-visaged horsemen with unkempt hair, whose full blouses and hide trousers belly in the wind as they ride; stooping from their lean little horses, they finish off the wounded with great blows of their axes. There are the Medes, slender and graceful, with their felt hats, their long tunics, tight round the waist, and their huge bows knocking against their shoulders. It had taken their combined forces four years of hard, uninterrupted fighting to bring Nineveh to her knees.[2]

Tall columns of smoke now rose from the highest part of the city. The fire had reached the masses of greenery which crowned the royal palace, and the hanging gardens became a fragrant furnace, from which came bursts of sparks and cries of pain and terror.

Sin-shar-ishkun,[3] the last King of Nineveh,[4] the scion of twenty illustrious generations, had caused a great pyre to be built on the terrace of his palace. In a closed chamber inside the pyre, surrounded by his riches, his women, his eunuchs, heedless of his people's yells of fear, he waited among everything that was familiar to him for the flames to reduce him to ashes, among the ashes of his household and his palace.[5] The flames did their work and gradually died out, leaving the pyre to stand, a black pyramid, over a city which was falling in on all sides, eaten away by fire.

Through the wide breach which the rising of the Tigris had made in the north wall, the horde of invaders poured into Nineveh. The streets were blocked with bodies and fallen masonry, and the warriors advanced slowly, staggering, clutching, to steady themselves, at blackened timbers, which stood like tree-trunks after a forest fire. Bodies, still in their dress and armour, fell into the waters of the Khusur, which had risen along the walls to the marks of the worst

floods of the past, a red tide threatening the two hills of Kuyunjik and Nebi-Yunus, on which the palaces of Sennacherib, Ashurbanipal, and Shalmaneser were now smoking ruins.[6] So, too, the tide of victorious warriors rose, and spread among the tottering walls to complete the destruction. They were joined by a greedy mob. All were possessed by a frenzied joy; for them, the days of bondage were ended, and they did not stop to think that other kings were dreaming of glory, and that conquered peoples would again have to pay the price.

Nebuchadnezzar,[7] the young commander-in-chief of

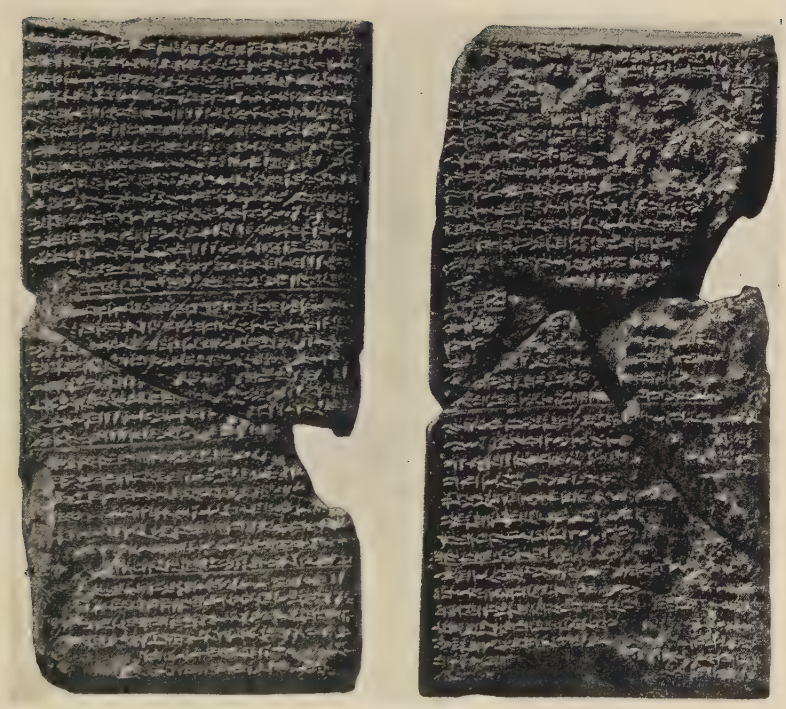
THE ONLY SUPPOSED PORTRAIT OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Cameo found in Asia, now in the Berlin Museum, probably engraved by a Greek in the service of the Great King. The surrounding cuneiform inscription reads: "To Marduk his lord, Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, for his life this made."

the Chaldæan armies, the son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, had gone up alone to the royal palace. A pile of black ash was still smoking, and flames were playing about the beautiful reliefs on which the torments to which Nineveh had subjected Babylon were written and depicted. With the tip of his sandal, he stirred the fire, wishing that it might blot out all trace of the glory of Assyria for ever; nothing must remain, save only a pile of ruins to bear witness to the glory of himself, Nebuchadnezzar. It was an intoxication to see the proud city being wiped out at his feet, while before him the "ziggurats", the huge towers in which the gods of Assyria dwelt, collapsed with a noise of

thunder, burying the bodies of their priests which lay disembowelled at their sacred portals.

A hot wind blew dust and ash about him. Mastering the exhaustion due to the hardships of the campaign, he felt that his strength was undiminished for other conquests. The Scythians need not be feared; they were savages who would be paid for their help by the loot. But the Medes—would they not want a share? Some arrangement must be made with them. Would it be possible to turn their ambition away from Babylon, to the western lands of mystery? At any rate, two years ago he had married Amytis, the daughter of Cyaxares, and that was the best guarantee of peace for Babylon. Standing motionless, with a smile which might mean much or little on his lips, he flashed his black eyes at the Median soldiers, who were coming up towards him behind their king, Cyaxares. With their axes they were hacking the gold plating from the statues of the gods which lay among the rubbish, as if they had been hewing off their flesh.[8] Overhead, a gloomy portent appeared which pleased Nebuchadnezzar—the crows, drawn to the banquet of dead Nineveh, wheeling black against the rosy sky.[9]



TABLET DESCRIBING THE FALL OF NINEVEH

No. 21901 in the British Museum. From Gadd, *The Fall of Nineveh*

[*face p.* 4

NOTES ON THE PROLOGUE

[1] The Babylonian Chronicle, No. 21,901, in the British Museum, relating events from the 10th to the 17th year of Nabopolassar (616–609 B.C.), describes the fall of Nineveh and at last tells us its date—612. See Gadd's edition, *The Fall of Nineveh*. It is a most important document, throwing a new light on the coalition formed by the Scythians and Medes with Babylon to destroy the power of Nineveh for good.

The tablet bears 27 lines of Achæmenian writing on the obverse and 39 on the reverse, written in Babylon by a scribe who concludes, "Whoso loves Nabu and Marduk, let him preserve this."

This valuable record of the Neo-Babylonian Empire gives us the military journal of these four years of fighting, of which Diodoros gives a historical picture. It is one of the few documents of its time which contain information about warfare, for the vast majority of inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar's reign relate to building and religious ceremonies. Its chief interest lies in the fact that it tells us that after the fall of Nineveh there was an attempt to preserve the Assyrian kingdom with Harran as capital.

It is of the greatest importance to find that on the whole Diodoros has done no more than embellish the facts, as was the Greek habit, for his account almost entirely agrees with this certain evidence. Before it was discovered, our only definite account of this great event was that on the Prism of Nabonidus (Scheil in *Recueil de travaux*, xviii, p. 15). Now we can fairly assume that the fall of Nineveh took place much as I have briefly described it.

[2] This was the first invasion of Nineveh for more than a hundred years. Hdt., i, 103. The total population of Nineveh must have been about 300,000.

[3] The dynasty of the Sargonids was as follows: Sargon II, 721–704; Sennacherib, 704–680; Esarhaddon, 680–667; Ashurbanipal, 667–625; Ashur-etil-ilani, 625–620; Sin-shar-ishkun, 620–612.

[4] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, p. 467. The successive labours of twenty generations of rulers had made a perfect en-

trenched camp of the triangle contained between the upper Zab, the Tigris, and the Jabal-Makhlub. The southern angle was defended against invasion from Chaldæa by Kalakh, while the north-western angle was overlooked by Nineveh and several walled towns, among which one may mention Dur-Sharrukin and Imgur-Bel. After passing through three lines of defence, the attacker found himself before the citadel, which was in the form of an irregular quadrilateral. On the west it was washed by the Tigris. The palaces of the Sargonids stood on the two mounds of Kuyunjik and Nebi-Yunus. The south wall, the shortest, was 870 yards long, the north wall 2,190 yards, and Sennacherib had fortified the eastern face with a rampart 5,470 yards long and over 50 feet high, with a moat 20 feet deep and 148 feet wide.

[5] Diodoros. As a matter of fact, the tablet, which is much mutilated about the year 612, does not definitely speak of the burning of Nineveh, but we know from every historian, from Abydenos and all the Greek and Latin authors to Maspero, and above all from the ruins of the city, which bear distinct marks of fire, that this was how the capital of Assyria met its end. The famous reliefs in the British Museum from the palace of Sennacherib are still marked by the flames which destroyed the palace.

[6] The famous "Palace which Oversees the World", the Kedalpedikat-Kelam.

[7] "The name of Nebuchadnezzar is written variously in the cuneiform texts. The most complete form, which we find, for example, in the Borsippa Inscription, is Nabi-uv-ku-du-ur-ri-u-tsu-ur, but Na-bi-uv must have been pronounced Nabu, since the name is usually spelt Nabu-kudurri-utsur, 'Nabu protects the Crown.' So the spelling taken by the French from the Septuagint through the Vulgate, *Nabuchodonosor*, comes nearer to the true Assyrian pronunciation than the Masoretic *Nebuchadnezzar*. Only there should be an *r* instead of the second *n*; and indeed, the *r* is preserved in Jeremiah (e.g. xlix, 28) and Ezra (ii, 1)" (Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes*, vol. iv, p. 142).

[8] "Their king, the intrepid one, annihilated the temples of the gods of Ashur utterly. He destroyed their holy place, and let none of them remain, he devastated their cities and laid them waste like a hurricane" (Prism of Nabonidus, col. ii, ll. 1–2, 41).

[9] Maspero, *Histoire* (Hachette ed.), p. 506. What is quite certain, is that Nineveh was completely destroyed.

All historians have been very severe on the Assyrian Empire, which collapsed in 612, on the fall of Nineveh. Maspero, in particular, writes: "If we look to Assyria for anything except conquests, we find that she possessed nothing which she had not

borrowed from her neighbours. She borrowed her sciences from Chaldæa, her arts from Chaldæa and Egypt, her writing from Chaldæa, her literature, scientific and religious, from Chaldæa. The only things that were all her own were the ferocity of her generals and the courage of her soldiers. From the day on which she emerged into history, she lived for nothing but war; on the day when the exhaustion of her population made further successes on the battlefield impossible, she ceased to have any reason to exist, and she disappeared. After but a few years, her history was no more than a theme of legends; less than two hundred years afterwards, the site of her capital was no longer known for certain. A Greek army passed almost under the shadow of its dismantled towers without suspecting that it was looking on all that was left of a city in which twenty generations of omnipotent monarchs had reigned in their glory." The ruined cities of Mespila and Larissa mentioned in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (iii, 4) were really Kalakh and Nineveh.

CHAPTER ONE

THE DASH FOR THE THRONE

Eight years have gone by.[1] Day is breaking over Pelusium, that advanced post of the Nile Delta which defends the gate of Egypt. Its ramparts show pale in the dawn; the Akkaru Sea weaves a girdle of white foam about their base; deep marshes lie between the army of Pharaoh Necho and the camp of Nebuchadnezzar. The two armies stand face to face, observing each other, as they await the moment for the decisive conflict.[2]

In the partition of the Assyrian Empire, Cyaxares, King of the Medes, had received the countries north-east of Babylon. Nabopolassar had taken those of the south-west, and Necho had thereby become his vassal. But Pharaoh had not accepted his fate; it seemed to him that the time had come to shake off the yoke which Babylon claimed to lay upon Egypt. He had reorganized his army, he had engaged Greek mercenaries, and, going out by the Isthmus of Suez, he had taken the road of the great Egyptian conquerors of the Eighteenth Dynasty. Occupying Palestine, Philistia, Phœnicia, Syria, almost without a blow, he had reached the Euphrates at Carchemish. When Josiah, King of Judah, true to the Babylonian alliance, had tried to oppose his passage, he had said, "What have I to do with thee, thou King of Judah? I come not against thee this day. I go to the Euphrates," [3] and he had crushed the Israelite army at Megiddo. His road lay open to Babylon.

Then Nabopolassar had once more entrusted the

armies of the kingdom to his son Nebuchadnezzar, and once more fortune had smiled on the young Chaldæan leader.[4] By forced marches, he had come into contact with Necho before Carchemish, and had broken the Egyptian army, which fled back by the coast. Hot in pursuit, Nebuchadnezzar had reconquered the kingdoms of Phœnicia, Philistia, Judah, Ammon, and Moab. He had now reached the point at which Egypt had always awaited her conquerors, and stood at the mouth of the river up which Esarhaddon and Sennacherib, the great Assyrian war-lords, had gone before him.

With eager eyes, he devoured Pelusium, its temples and its obelisks. It was not only a powerful fortress, but one of the chief trading-centres of the world; in its harbour were ships of the Phœnicians, the Syrians, the Greeks, the Cypriots—all the great sea-traders—and by the Gaza road the caravans brought all the wealth of the Near East.

Nebuchadnezzar had taken fortresses enough before this. Once past Pelusium, the sun of his glory was risen. The road to Memphis would be open, as it had once been to Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. The Pharaohs, remembering those conquerors from Asia, had made the town into a rampart, to break the impetus of his advance.[5] A proud smile lit up the face of the victorious prince, and he stretched out his arms towards that cultured, charming Egypt which he would make his handmaiden. There would be glorious raiding, by the river which wound now among golden sand and now through rustling greenery. There would be the accumulated wealth of centuries, protected, for the most part, by no more guard than a sleeping mummy.

A trumpet sounded, and a man stopped before Nebuchadnezzar, the horse foaming in his little Babylonian chariot—a courier from Babylon. A loud hubbub broke out in the Chaldæan camp; all knew already

that the courier brought their leader the news that Nabopolassar, his father and king, was dead.

Nebuchadnezzar plied the man with questions. Was it true that his young brother Nabu-shum-lishir,[6] who had stayed behind in Babylon, had tried, in defiance of all traditions, to secure the throne for himself in his brother's absence? The Chaldæan race was so ready to fall in with treachery if it paid; rights of blood or of valour, historical tradition, moral laws, meant nothing to it unless they brought a prospect of gain.

What did Nebuchadnezzar now care for Necho, Egypt, or the glories which had beckoned him beyond the Delta? What were conquests, when his throne was at stake? He would meet Pharaoh again, and in the meantime he must secure his benevolent neutrality by an armistice which, while allowing Necho moral satisfaction in some points, would leave himself free to organize his kingdom and to lay in Babylon the solid foundations of the empire of which it should be the capital and he the lord.

For Necho, the armistice meant salvation. Carchemish had clearly shown him the superiority of the Chaldæan battalions over his Egyptians. As Nebuchadnezzar, in offering the truce, fully intended to return one day and dictate his terms to Egypt, so Necho, in accepting it, abandoned not one jot of his hopes of raising the Egyptian Empire from its ruins, delivering it from its internal dissensions, and giving it once more the supremacy in Asia to which its glorious past and mellow civilization entitled it. But, like Nebuchadnezzar Necho wanted time. No empire could hope to endure, if it had not the mastery of the sea.[7] Babylon, mighty as it might be on land, would never have the possibility of expansion, without which the future was closed to it, unless it had free access to the sea. Necho, therefore, hoped to make use of the years of respite given him by Nabopolassar's death in providing Egypt with an immense fleet of

triremes,[8] galleys, and ships with rams. This would make him master of the Mediterranean, and would secure the friendship of all peoples living on that sea who felt Babylon casting covetous glances in their direction—the Phœnicians, the Israelites, even the peoples of the North. To establish that naval supremacy yet more strongly, he would re-excavate the old canal of Seti I,[9] which, by connecting the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, would bring most of the world's trade to Egypt, and, in addition, would make it possible to take Babylon in the rear by the Persian Gulf.

So the armistice was concluded in Nebuchadnezzar's tent. It confirmed the supremacy of Babylon over the Euphrates and the whole of Syria to the Wadi al-Arish. To seal the truce, Necho gave his daughter Nitocris [10] to the King of Chaldæa, to be his second wife.

But this was no time for effusions of sentiment. Nebuchadnezzar was impatient to conquer his father's throne, not the heart of an unknown lady, the refinement of whose upbringing assorted but little with his own crude, ambitious nature.

In his eagerness to reach Babylon as soon as possible, he could not wait for a slow-moving army. He would not even follow the usual round-about road by Carchemish and Mesopotamia. Leaving the troops and the plunder to his generals, and taking only a small light-armed escort, he plunged across the Arabian Desert towards his destiny.[11]

Nebuchadnezzar stood in his low-wheeled chariot. With an impatient gesture, he bade the driver whip up the light-limbed Syrian mares, whose hoofs raised the dust in a luminous cloud behind him. At the end of the golden pole was a symbolic lion, which seemed to want to devour the horizon with its open jaws; on the sides of the chariot, the arrows rattled in their quivers of worked leather; above the royal head a

gold-embroidered umbrella, held up by Ashpenaz, the faithful eunuch,[12] swayed and bobbed with the wind and the jolting.

Nebuchadnezzar did not even deign to look back to see whether the few soldiers whom he had brought with him, mounted on their chariots, were following him in his wild dash for the throne. His pride would not allow a doubt of his destiny.

He went along the coast of the Mediterranean as far as the land of Edom, and then turned off to the right, to the Arabian Desert. He disdained Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Judah, whence there came to him, amid the noise of internal dissensions, the mysterious call of prophets who glorified him as the servant of a redoubtable god about whom he knew nothing. He disdained, too, the opulent shores of Phœnicia, although the treasures of the Kings of Tyre and Sidon would have been welcome to his people. First of all he must be made King, to put an end to all plotting and to forestall defection.

But once he was King, it would be his task to govern all these peoples who, together with Egypt, had become vassals of Babylon on the fall of Nineveh. To rule these nations, with their different aspirations, even different ideas, to reconcile their animosities, to satisfy their desires without increasing them, to combine their forces in the service of a single empire—his empire—to give them as their sole and supreme ideal the service of his glory—what policy could bring this about?

Diplomacy could only give a partial satisfaction, as the other day at Pelusium. The world could only be governed by might, and by a might which was evident to the wildest tribe. He must strike quickly and hard. Moral victories could be forgotten, treaties torn up, alliances betrayed. Might could not be asserted by written documents, however solemn. Might proved itself by ruined cities and dead men. It could not be

judged save by itself, its own laws and its own decrees. It was not to be argued about, but to be submitted to. Might had in itself a power which demanded, as a due, all the riches of the world, and might belonged only to men of ambition and self-will, whose designs were not troubled by considerations of peace, justice, or proportion, or even by fear of the gods; the gods were with the strong, who justified their victories in the name of the divine will. Who would be so foolish as to try to impose his will permanently on the world and to possess it, without appropriating to his own ends every kind of spiritual and material riches, and blotting out in fire and blood every seed of a rival ambition?

Imagination carried Nebuchadnezzar, not yet even certain of his throne, faster and further than his chariot, to the conquest of the earth. But he was enough of a realist to try to define the essential preliminaries of that conquest.[13]

The Kingdom of Judah was an easy prey. It was tearing itself to pieces in an intestine strife between its petty kings, who were little more than brigand chiefs eager for a life of debauch, and the prophets who flattered the low instincts of a mystical-minded people. Politically, moreover, Jerusalem had always been the willing and interested instrument of the ambitions of Egypt, and Egypt had always been able to secure its alliance by paying the Kings of Judah sufficiently.

The Assyrians had seen this clearly enough. If their enterprise against the Israelites had failed, it was because they had not destroyed all their cities, sacked their temples, deported the people, and carried off their wealth, as Shalmaneser had done to Samaria. What could the Israelites expect from their god Jehovah, who had promised to give the earth to his chosen people, if Jehovah reigned over nothing but ruins? The spiritual force which peoples draw from a divine faith, from an ideal always promised and

never obtained, would never survive the destruction of the material symbols of that ideal.

After Jerusalem, it would be the turn of Tyre—conceited Tyre, which affected to despise might, because it had wealth, and had the cunning to make the best use of it in every kind of business. Shalmaneser and Sennacherib had not been so clever as they thought, when they had made terms with the Phœnician kings, the wealthy tradesmen whose ships went everywhere and made the law of the seas.[14] They were outwitted, when all they had to do was to destroy the Phœnician cities and take their riches.

It was true that Ethbaal, King of Tyre, had made his submission to Babylon after the fall of Nineveh. It was worth his while to go over to the victors and to secure himself against pillage at the price of a small tribute, offered almost of his free will. But Nebuchadnezzar was not a fool. He knew that Ethbaal was secretly one of Necho's allies, and not the least of them, thus insuring himself against danger from the revival of Egyptian sea-power. The combined fleets of the two might catch Babylon to-morrow in the strangle-hold of a marine blockade which would exhaust her.

Against this menace, Nebuchadnezzar could not count on the help of the King of the Medes, Cyaxares, his old ally against Nineveh. In that quarter, diplomacy had shown the limits of its possibilities. When Nabopolassar had directed the attention of the Medes away from Babylon, northwards and westwards, he had raised up against his allies the Lydians and Phrygians, and these kept up a constant warfare which occupied all the energies of the Medic armies, which had given the Chaldæans such useful help in the war of independence against Assyria.[15] No matter; inspiration and will-power would make up for all deficiencies. Nebuchadnezzar would fight wealth with wealth.

The Arabian peninsula lay at his right hand, stretching into infinite distance. The countless caravans

which bore the prodigious wealth of the Indus to the shores of the Mediterranean must be forcibly diverted to the Persian Gulf and the Euphrates. What a chance, too, for profitable raids on those Arabian kingdoms, all different but all splendid [16]—sumptuous Duma, pastoral Najd, the wild but rich Empire of the Jarhums, and lastly, far in the south, the fabled Kingdom of Sheba! The mere memory of the cruel visitation which he envisaged would suffice to ensure a steady supply of tribute from those simple peoples for a long time.

Then he would be free to deal with Egypt. As lord of the world, he would again meet Necho at Pelusium, and Pharaoh would have no alternative but submission or defeat. On the Nile, Babylon's supremacy would receive its final consecration and his own ambitions their crown.[17]

Again he ordered the horses to be urged on. The infinite vacuity of the desert rolled past like a phantasmagoria under a dead sky. The intoxication of the solitude made him tremble. He wanted to drive yet faster, further into the immensity which called him. His dreams went before.

The sun was blazing its fiercest, and the flat distance was atremble in the heat. The solitude was only broken by the little herds of gazelle, which would rush by in phantom flight, faint as clouds of dust. Nebuchadnezzar went on and on into the unknown, where, for all the brightness of the sun, sand and stone and the silence and the horror of boundless space carried a threat of a destruction which must one day come.

Would Babylon go down, as Nineveh had gone down? No! He would give Babylon the sea, the sea which Nineveh had never had. He would bring the waters of the Persian Gulf up to the port which he would build under the walls of Babylon, and all the fleets of the world would moor there. On land and sea there would be but one power, Babylon, and one

king, the sovereign lord of that power, Nebuchadnezzar, who would take his stand among the gods, for the edification of future ages and the glorification of his might.

The chariot pursued its course.[18] Things softened and merged in one quiet tone. The sun had set, leaving a band of pink and green which rose in the sky, gradually darkening, until there remained only an immense dome of deep blue. Ashpenaz closed the umbrella. Nebuchadnezzar felt the spell of the twilight hour, and looked up at the sky, where the first stars were beginning to shine. These were his real gods—the mysterious constellations which wrote the fate of men on the sky. To-night they seemed very near the earth, where his chariot, a tiny speck in the vast desert, bore the fortune of Babylon.

The evening wind had risen. Nebuchadnezzar shivered in spite of himself under the cold, melancholy light of the sovereign stars. All human will, however ambitious and proud and sure of itself, must surrender before the majesty of the heavenly dome on which, since the world had been, the divine powers had marked down the destinies of men in their prophetic motions.[19] For thousands of years, the priests of Chaldæa had been interpreting the verdicts of those sparkling deities, the lords of days, nights, seasons, and years, to whom kings were subject like other mortals.

Nebuchadnezzar scowled at them, brooding. Could he not induce the priests, by force if need be, to adapt their interpretation of celestial phenomena to his desires? He would give much in order that the consultation, which he would request in the course of his first night as King in Babylon, should be in accordance with his own dreams. But he recoiled at the thought of the sacrilege.

The great roof of night, sparkling with specks of gold, lay heavy on his shoulders. It was very far from the arm which he raised towards it—in prayer or

in menace? Pray? He tried to recall the consultation, in the form of a prayer, which Ashurbanipal had received from his astrologers on his accession. "May the Gods grant the King, my Lord, day after day, month after month, year after year, joy in his heart, well-being in his body and mirth, a throne stable for ever, for the days to come and for many years!"

But even if, like Ashurbanipal, he became lord of the world, his empire would fall as Ashurbanipal's had done, and the stars would go on shining for ever, indifferent to the glory and decay of men, and the heavens would present the oracular plan of their revolutions to other ambitious ones of the earth.

Should he give it all up, then? All his pride revolted at the thought, which denied the latent power surging within him and driving him through the darkness towards the throne which he desired. After all, why look beyond this world? All that he wanted was to rule this world; the gods would help him, and he would leave it to them to provide his subjects with the illusions which make men content with their lot and ready to serve strong souls like his own.

The world was to him who could rouse in his people the strongest passion.[20] His predecessors had developed in the Sumerians a passion for civilization, and they had ruled the Semites. Hammurabi, the great founder of Babylon, had based the glory of his reign on a passion for justice and law. This had lasted until the day when a frightful passion for war had arisen in Nineveh, to hold the world under its cruel sway for three hundred years. But Babylon was lifted up by its passion for freedom, and Nineveh fell. What passion could Nebuchadnezzar now excite in his subjects, to make them serve his ambition? They were a realistic people; how could he justify in their eyes the sacrifices required by the conquests of which he dreamed? Economic necessity—that was the lever and the excuse which he would find for the exercise

of his might.[21] Babylonian hearts had always nursed a passion for business; he would satisfy it.

Nothing could now be seen in the surrounding blackness. Nebuchadnezzar urged on his chariot, but he became filled with melancholy. All passions were fleeting. The passion for business, which cooled as soon as it was satisfied, was perhaps the shortest-lived of all. How much deeper and more enduring was that which still, after two thousand eight hundred years and in spite of every assault, kept the Egyptian colossus standing in sovereign immobility! That passion consisted in the interest in the future state which led the Egyptian to make it the chief object of this life to build himself a tomb, his "House of Eternity", where, secure from mortal turns of fortune, he should enjoy human life at its happiest for ever.

Once again, Nebuchadnezzar rebelled.[22] The great works of men must inevitably come to an end, but even in that end his desire for power should be glorified. Empires might fall; the glory of the men who had built them remained. One day, perhaps, his people would be taken in bondage by a stronger master, but it would first have been the instrument of the glory of Nebuchadnezzar, and on every side bricks and stones would say to future ages: "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, I! What no king had done before, I did!" [23]

The tired horses stopped. Dim figures moved about. The tent which, only that morning, had sheltered Nebuchadnezzar before Pelusium, was put up in the midst of the sandy waste, more threatening than ever in the darkness. Suddenly, the tents were lit up by a bright, mysterious light. The Moon-god had reared his globe of polished silver in the dark blue sky. On the ground he cast shadows as stiff and pallid as spectres. The shadow of Nebuchadnezzar stood against the wall of his tent, hard and colossal. Was this, even now, the immortality of the sculptured

reliefs? Not yet—not until all his dreams had become realities! "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, I!"

A breeze passed, and the shape on the moving cloth was only a wavering shadow.

One night, all of a sudden, the air was filled with sounds of life. The ground rang with a new note under Nebuchadnezzar's chariot-wheels and the hoofs of his horses. Above a bed of gypsum, the soil was impregnated with selenite and common salt. In places, asphalt had oozed up to the surface in shiny black patches.[24] The track, running straight across the desert sand, gave place to a road winding over great plains of barley. Vegetation appeared—salsolas, pallasias, and little strongly-scented mimosas. Beasts became numerous, and almost homely—pelicans, grouse, wild asses, and ostriches.

Now the countryside was full of human activity. On all sides busy figures could be seen in the grey dawn, along the countless furrows with which the fertile soil was scored. The Arabian Desert was a pale pink line along the far horizon, barely visible. Nebuchadnezzar gazed with his anxious eyes at the green, populous plain.[25] After the unlimited spaces of the desert, the patchwork of the ground and the dense life had a strange effect; they seemed to reduce everything in size—even his dreams.

In this same dim daybreak, the Tigris and the Euphrates were shining like two great serpents; at their confluence stood that sombre mass, crowned with towers, domes, and pinnacles, which was Babylon; far in the north-east, against the mountains of Media, was Ecbatana, the city of Cyaxares, jealously watching its rival; to the south, the great Marratu Sea, the Persian Gulf, curved towards Babylon, in outline like a conch.

By the side of that sea, in the land of Sumer, hillmen from Armenia had settled in the first years of the world.

They had big round heads and broad, thick-set bodies. They were dogged and hard-working ; [26] expert husbandmen, capable metal-workers, and first-rate fighting men, they had brought to that region the first seeds of the civilization of the world.[27] Their ancient cities still stood—Lagash, Erech, Eridu, and Ur. The Chaldæans had conquered them, but had taken from their civilization the qualities which made them to-day " that bitter and hasty nation, which march through the breadth of the earth. . . . They are terrible and dreadful ; their judgement and their dignity proceed from themselves." [28]

Further north, the country of Akkad, the other cradle, Arabian and Syrian, of the Chaldæan race, had likewise kept its ancient cities of Kish and Agade as witnesses to a glorious past.

The scene might be restricted, flat, monotonous, even mean, but here Nebuchadnezzar found the genius of his race and of its history. All those old cities of Sumer and Akkad had shown the first light of ordered, progressive kingship in a barbarous world. They had contested and shared the supremacy until the year 2225,[29] when Sumu-abu, King of Babylon, had united Sumer and Akkad under his sceptre. Then Babylon had shone in all its glory. Hammurabi,[30] the most illustrious of its kings (2123–2080 B.C.), had dictated his law to the world, and even Egypt had adopted his code.[31] But might had triumphed over right ; in 1270, Tiglath-pileser, King of Assyria, had conquered all Chaldæa, and for seven hundred years Nineveh had held Babylon in ruthless subjection. Yet the legal and administrative regulations which Hammurabi had given to his people were so strong that the political power of Babylon had remained intact, the seed of future sovereignty. To his ancestor, Nebuchadnezzar I,[32] had fallen the glory of raising the standard of revolt in 1150 and waging a stubborn war for freedom. After him, in 721, Merodach-baladan [33]

NINGIRSU, SON OF GUDEA

Statue from Ur. From Scheil, in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, vol. xxii, 1925.
By courtesy of M. Ernest Leroux

[*face p.* 20

had become the hero of that tragic saga; for sixty years he had been the redoubtable foe of Sennacherib, with whom he disputed the throne of his ancestors. His sons, Nabu-zer-kinu-lishir and Na'id-Marduk,

KING MARDUK-NADIN-AKHE.
From the stone in the British Museum.

had carried on the struggle with varying fortunes. Nabu-Bel-zikri, his grandson, had, with the aid of the Kings of Elam, raised a great coalition against Nineveh, but he had been defeated, and Babylon had been severely chastised. Esarhaddon, King of Assyria, had

given the city a viceroy, Shamash-shum-ukin,[34] who ruled it with a rod of iron, but had restored its magnificence. Then Shamash-shum-ukin had one day thought himself strong enough to declare his independence as King of Babylon, and Esarhaddon had besieged him in his capital, taken him prisoner, executed him, and sacked Babylon completely, in 650.[35] Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, who was appointed governor of the city by Ashurbanipal as Viceroy of Assyria, had not been deterred by this setback from the work of liberation. By a skilful diplomacy which won him the necessary alliances and by incessant fighting, he had brought it to a successful conclusion, and in 612 the fall of Nineveh, for which Babylon had been striving for seven centuries, set the seal on his glory.[36]

Nebuchadnezzar reflected that it now fell to him to show himself a worthy successor of his brave Chaldæan forbears and to crown their endeavours. His power would hasten the splendid day which should see Babylon shining alone in its glory over the whole earth.

Like a changing stage-scene, the infinite monotony of the country gave place to an enchanted garden.[37] Under the blue-green, swaying plumes of the tall palm-trees,[38] among tamarisks, date-palms, rushes, and flowers, water murmured all around. Irrigation-ditches [39] wound and intersected and broadened into still lakes like shining silver. The Tigris and Euphrates flowed slowly over the plain. After the long days of frantic driving, Nebuchadnezzar revelled in the cool landscape and the clear, living water, which wove a tracery of blue and silver and gold over the whole countryside and fell asleep in little artificial tanks. Drawn by those countless mirrors, the light created effects of fairylike beauty. The atmosphere seemed saturated and diluted with it. One could see far and clearly; and at every point of the horizon

the sun caught the high ziggurats whose stories of many colours stood out above the towns, clearly defined yet seeming unreal—the first buildings which men had raised to the gods, as symbols of their prayers and their faith. Under their guardian shadow, the first civilization of the world had developed, for they held the famous libraries in which Chaldæan science had for ages stored all that human knowledge had to say about the problems of the Creation and the unfathomable mysteries of the causes and ends of human destiny.

But Nebuchadnezzar no longer saw these things. His eyes were fixed on the great wall whose line of towers and battlements rose higher and higher against the sky as he advanced. Babylon seemed to hang from the sky, a rigid, astounding chaos.[40]

What had happened on the other side of those walls? Had Nergalorosor succeeded in safeguarding the throne which was his by right? Or had he thought it advisable or profitable to give it to Nabu-shum-lishir, Nebuchadnezzar's younger brother? No, no; Babylon was waiting for him, the capital of his ancestors. Who could defend it better than he? For that purpose, he would make use of the Euphrates, the River of the Region of Day. He was already planning out the system of canals, which would, in addition to protecting the city, enormously increase the usefulness of the river as a source of wealth.[41]

And, as the gift of his love to the city which was the bride of his ambition, he promised to make her impregnable and eternal.

"To strengthen the fortifications of Babylon, I shall do what no king has done before. On the east of the city I shall build a great wall, covering 4,000 cubits of land, from the upper to the lower bend of the Euphrates. I shall dig its moat, which I shall make strong with mortar and bricks, and on the edge of it a wall of bricks and mortar shall rise like a mountain.[42] I shall build great gates,

with doors of cedar-wood which I shall line with copper. But all that will not be enough. On the outskirts of Babylon, from the bank of the Euphrates to the Arakhtu Canal, I shall make an earthen rampart. I shall surround the city with running water to defend it. I shall take yet further care: and above Ur, near Sippar, I shall make another earthwork, from the Tigris to the Euphrates, covering fourteen *kiskalgits* of ground. There, too, the water shall surround the city like the waves of the sea, and I shall revet the earthwork with bricks and mortar, that the water may not destroy it. So the course of the life of the peoples of Babylonia shall be made happy." [43]

He had unconsciously slackened his pace. There stood his goal, on an artificial hill, raised in some time beyond reckoning. What lay behind the walls of the gloomy city under the bright sky? The King saw only a mysterious mass, set among the plains of wheat and barley which stretched for miles. Over that sheet of green velvet, flowers wove arabesques of colour, and so crowded on to the road that the chests of the horses were garlanded with pink and yellow and blue.[44]

As Nebuchadnezzar came closer to that amazing display of size and strength, its weakness and wretchedness became apparent. Huge blocks of brick were stripped of their plaster, there were large holes in the walls, and the canals were streaked with long black smears which might come from the asphalt with which the crumbling bricks were cemented or from the filth of the town. An oath sprang to his lips:

"Imgur-Bel and Nimitti-Bel, the two great fortifications of Babylon, which Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, the father who begot me, commenced but did not complete in their magnificence, I, his eldest son, who glorify his heart, I shall complete them, Imgur-Bel and Nimitti-Bel, the two great fortifications of Babylon!" [45]

Behind the wall, measuring a hundred and twenty stades to a side,[46] which surrounded the huge quadri-

lateral of Babylon, with great square towers on every face,[47] rising sixteen feet above the line of the battlements, another wall, like the first but still higher, Nimitti-Bel, could now be seen, and beyond it, among the copper domes of the fifty-four temples, the two sacred ziggurats soared into the sky. One was a blaze of colour, red and gold predominating, against the blue. This was the pyramid in which the god Bel-Marduk, the organizer of the world, had lain since the beginning of time. Here Nebuchadnezzar hoped presently to receive the royal investiture in the small chapel of the temple of Esagila, which stood by the side of the ziggurat. The other was the tower of Borsippa, which had the milder beauty of ancient things. In the bright light, it had a quiet, mellow, unobtrusive air, which invited meditation and reverie. Here Nebuchadnezzar would go to-night to consult the stars.

As he drew nearer, the walls [48] seemed to rise like a dark screen in front of the gaudy domes and towers. Now there was only a wide, deep moat between him and one of the hundred gates with brass doors which gave entrance to his capital.[49] He entered a long corridor which ran through the thickness of the wall,[50] guarded by two enormous copper bulls and sphinxes with serpents' heads.[51] In the gloom of the adjoining guard-rooms, soldiers were waiting to take their turn on the roadway, sixty-five feet wide, which ran along the top of the wall round the whole circuit.

Beyond the walls a scene as unexpected as it was beautiful met the eye—green fields of wheat and barley, rustling palm-groves, bright flowers, flocks and herds. In time of siege, it was here that the Babylonians got their supplies. Now the King was in the populous quarter of Hillah,[52] with its busy cotton industry and trade in dried bats. Above it frowned the gloomy mass of Nimitti-Bel (Foundation of Bel), whose high walls of red-brown brick set in black asphalt bore

witness by their worn condition to the assaults of time and men.

Another gate, another dark passage-way under the road which ran along the wall-top,[53] and Nebuchadnezzar was in a network of streets among crowded houses and temples of every age and every appearance. The swarming population prostrated itself as he passed. So the throne had been kept safe for him. Full of enthusiasm, he drove on. Another gateway, with the heavy brass doors wide open. He heard the calm murmur of the unseen Euphrates,[54] and plunged into the famous tunnel which his father had bored under the river.[55] To go round by the great bridge would have taken too long. Under the vault of baked brick, protected from the water by a layer of asphalt four cubits thick, Nebuchadnezzar had to stoop in his chariot, for the height was only eleven feet, and for a hundred and thirty yards he drove slowly in a dense, damp atmosphere. The torches burned dimly. A glimmer of daylight appeared through another brazen door, from which a stair rose steeply. Then Nebuchadnezzar, shaking with excitement, stood upright in the court of the old castle of the Kings of Babylon, which had been sacked so many times since the days of Hammurabi, but which he, Nebuchadnezzar, would make the centre of the world.[56]

At the same time, a long caravan was leaving Pelusium and moving northwards. The luckless Nitocris turned to bid a sad farewell to the sweet land of Egypt which she would never see again—a land of laughter and pleasure, where the joy of living ran so high that even beyond the grave an eternity of it awaited those who had tasted it on this earth. In the gloomy palace which Babylon contained within its high embattled walls, the couch of the conqueror awaited her.

NOTES ON CHAPTER ONE

[1] We owe much of our information about Nebuchadnezzar to Berosus, a priest of Bel in Babylon, born in the time of Alexander the Great. In the reign of Antiochos Soter (281–260), he wrote a history of Babylon in Greek in three books, and the use which he made of the temple archives gives his work a historical value which has earned him the name of the Manetho of Chaldæa. He relates that after the fall of Nineveh, Nebuchadnezzar was associated in the kingship by his aged father Nabopolassar, and that he had to fight for three years to advance the bounds of the Empire to the Syrian fords of the Euphrates, all on account of the effervescent Pharaoh Necho.

The *Grande Encyclopédie* states, on the authority of Pliny, that the Athenians set up in honour of Berosus a statue with a golden tongue, to show the esteem in which they held his knowledge. He was a famous astronomer, and settled in Cos, where he taught. The best edition of the surviving fragments of his history of Babylon is in Müller, *Fragmenta Historicorum Græcorum* (Coll. Didot).

[2] Strabo (xvii, 1, 21) ascribes the difficulty of invading Egypt by Pelusium to the presence of these marshes, and adds: "The country between the Nile and the Red Sea is counted as Arabia, and Pelusium stands at the easternmost point of it; it is all desert and impassable to an army."

[3] 2 Chronicles, xxxv, 20–2.

[4] To about this date we may ascribe the only letter of the famous conqueror, of which Thureau-Dangin writes (*Revue d' Assyriologie*, vol. xxii, 1925, p. 27): "I have quoted from Contenau a letter of Nebuchadnezzar, as heir to the throne, in which allusion is made to Nabopolassar's campaign against Harran, which the Assyrian remnant had made their capital. This campaign the Chronicle published by Gadd places in the sixteenth year of that king, i.e. in 610." "Letter from Nebuchadnezzar to Ninurta-sar-utsur, Nabu-nadin-saru, and Marrukitid. Greeting! May Bel and Nabu your welfare decree. The King to the land of Harran has gone. A great force of the Medes has departed. Whosoever loves the King and loves me, too, brother and child may he keep them. . . ."

This event is related by the Chronicle of Nabopolassar as follows: "In the eighth month, the Umman-manda came to the help of the King of Akkad. They joined their armies, and then marched on Harran against Ashur-uballit, who had seated himself on the throne of Ashur." The Umman-manda were the Medes.

[5] Vigouroux, *Dictionnaire de la Bible.*

[6] The name of this younger brother of Nebuchadnezzar appears beside our hero's in a dedication of the Temple of Marduk (Cylinder of Nabopolassar, col. iii, ll. 6–25).

[7] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, p. 531.

[8] Invented by the Corinthian shipbuilders. Herodotos (ii, 159) states that in his day the ruins of the shipyards which Necho had built for the construction of triremes could still be seen on the coasts of the Red Sea and the Mediterranean.

[9] Hdt., ii, 158. Necho corrected the line, and widened it so that two triremes could pass. It started from the Pelusiac Arm at Patumos, not far from Bubastis, followed the foot of the Arabian hills eastwards, thence ran down the gorge of the Wadi Tumilat, and came out at the head of the bay which is now the lake by Ismailiya. Tradition related that, after losing 100,000 men over the undertaking, Necho gave it up on the strength of an oracle.

[10] Berosus, frag. 14 in *F.H.G.*, vol. ii, p. 506; Josephus, *Jewish Antiquities*, i, 10.

[11] Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 42–63. Nitocris, Nebuchadnezzar's second wife, was the daughter of Necho and a sister of the great Nitocris, who is known to have been a priestess of Amon. Nothing is known of her except that she had a daughter of the same name, who married Nabonidus. This third Nitocris was the celebrated queen who acted as Regent in Babylon (when Nabonidus made Tema in Arabia the capital of the Empire and resided there) and was Belshazzar's mother.

It has been supposed by Herodotos and all other historians in the past that our Nitocris was the wife of Nabopolassar, but it now seems proved that this could not have been the case. Nabopolassar was not noble enough to marry a Pharaoh's daughter in the early part of his life, when he was not a king, and when he became king he was fighting continually from 626 to 616, and from 616 to 605 he was at war with Assyria and Egypt, when, if he had married Pharaoh's daughter, history would have recorded it. It is reasonable, on the other hand, that the treaty of 604 should have been sealed by the marriage of Nitocris to Nebuchadnezzar. Already, nine years before he became king, he had married the daughter of Cyaxares. Thus both his marriages were political.

[12] Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes*, vol. iv, p. 396. His name, which has been preserved by Holy Writ, should be Ashpenazar, which means "The Lady" (Ishtar of Nineveh) "formed the seed".

[13] See below, ch. ii.

[14] See below, chh. vi, viii.

[15] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. vi, pp. 337–471.

[16] See below, ch. viii.

[17] Langdon, *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*. The most valuable documents for the reign of Nebuchadnezzar which we possess are the twenty-seven inscriptions found up to date. They cover the forty-five years of his reign, which they enable us to divide into four periods:

I. 604–600. *Prayers containing allusions to past conflicts.* Three stone cylinders in the British Museum, and some other stone cylinders, one of which is in the Metropolitan Museum.

II. 600–593. *Period of peace and great activity.* Erection of temples in Babylon and the ancient centres of the kingdom; beginning of the production of inscriptions on a large scale. These inscriptions are as follows:

(i) Restoration of the ziggurat of Etemenanki in Babylon. Fragment of a cylinder found in Babylon, now in the Babylonian Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

(ii) Restoration of the temple of Ebarra at Larsa. Cylinder.

(iii) The same event. Brick from Larsa (Senkereh).

(iv) Restorations made in the Temple of Sin at Ur by Nebuchadnezzar (this was the first temple rebuilt by him). Brick from the temple.

(v) Restoration of the old Palace. Stone cylinder from Babylon belonging to Sir Thomas Philippe known as the Grotefend Inscription.

(vi) Restoration of the temple Emakh in Babylon. Stone cylinder in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

(vii) Restoration of the ziggurat of Etemenanki in Babylon. Cylinder in the Babylonian Museum of the University of Pennsylvania.

(viii) Restoration of Eedina, the temple of Belit at Sippar. Cylinder in the British Museum.

(ix) Diversion of the course of the Euphrates to the city of Sippar. Cone found at Sippar, in the British Museum.

(x) Restoration of Eulla at Sippar. Stone cylinder in the British Museum.

III. 593–580. *Period of wars and expeditions.* Development of the canals; predominance of the worship of Nabu; evolution of inscriptions in the historical style. From this period we have only one inscription, but it is long (720 lines)

and of great importance—that of the Wadi Brissa, which Nebuchadnezzar caused his scribes and architects to engrave during the siege of Jerusalem.

IV. 580–561. *Last period.* Political activity, palace-building, increase of the power of Marduk, and a further and complete evolution in the style of the documents.

(i) Restoration of the ziggurat of Borsippa. Stone cylinder found in the ziggurat.

(ii) Construction of a palace north of the east wall. Stone cylinder in the British Museum. This cylinder is the first composition which breaks altogether with the literary habits of the past, and tries to give historical details of different events. So we see that Nebuchadnezzar started political methods only in the second half of his reign.

(iii) Lastly, the greatest of all the inscriptions of this reign, immortalized under the name of the East India House Inscription, a block of black basalt, one metre high and ten centimetres thick, in ten columns containing 621 lines of archaic script, describing the restoration of the old Palace and the building of a new one.

[18] See below, ch. viii.

[19] See below, ch. ii.

[20] See below, ch. x.

[21] See ch. ix.

[22] See ch. xi.

[23] See Koldewey, *The Excavations at Babylon*, pp. 45, 76–7, 79, 84 ff., 159, 170 ff., for many translations of bricks of Nebuchadnezzar. None bears these exact words, which are here given in a psychological sense, as may be imagined.

[24] Diod., ii, 130: "This material is so abundant that the people collect it after sufficient has been taken for all buildings. They dry it and burn it like wood. Enormous numbers draw it from a great well which is never exhausted. Near by is a fountain, which presents an extraordinary phenomenon, for its vapours are so violent as to produce asphyxia (sulphuretted hydrogen). Beyond the river, a lake is shown, in which the swimmer is swallowed up as in a quicksand." Asphalt has the same origin as coal—the slow decomposition of the organic remains of immense antediluvian forests of resinous trees.

[25] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. ii, p. 25.

[26] C. Leonard Woolley, *The Sumerians*. The author is the celebrated British excavator who is clearing the ancient Sumerian capital of Ur, the home of Abraham in the Bible.

[27] *Ibid.* The Sumerian genius, which invented, in particular, the cuneiform alphabet and the art of building the dome, developed a civilization which lasted fifteen hundred years and

had its influence on all the early empires. From this part of the world, where the Chaldæans afterwards settled, Sumer spread by the valleys of the Tigris and Euphrates as far as Syria and even beyond the Taurus, so that all the barbarous countries received a veneer of Sumerian civilization.

This civilization was so fine that it did not suffer by the extinction of the Sumerian people. The Code of Hammurabi was based on the old laws of Sumer; the Sumerian gods only changed their names to become Chaldæan gods; the Sumerian language was forgotten, but, thanks to its alphabet, it was translated into Semitic, into Assyrian; Assyrian sculpture of the eighth century is the same as that of Sumer.

The civilization of Sumer was already brilliant in 3500 B.C. This was the time of the First Dynasty of Ur and the magnificence of Prince Mes-kalam-dug and Queen Shub-ad, contemporaries of Pharaoh Menes, who was then founding at Thinis the First Dynasty of those Pharaohs who were to succeed one another in Egypt down to Necho, Nebuchadnezzar's enemy. Ur and Thinis were the two lamps of civilization in a world still plunged in savagery. A scene engraved on an ivory knife shows the reception—far from friendly—given by the Egyptians to the Sumerians on the shore of the Red Sea. One may confidently say that the underlying foundations of Egyptian civilization were of Sumerian origin.

[28] Habakkuk, i, 6–7.

[29] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 38.

[30] King, *History of Babylon*, pp. 89, 99, 103, 153, 181 ff., 296; also 161, 188 ff.

[31] V. Scheil, *La Loi de Hammourabi*.

[32] Nebuchadnezzar I conceived the large project of subjugating all the peoples of the earth. Manasseh was the King of Judah (Maspero, small ed., p. 347; large ed., vol. ii, pp. 607–42). This Nebuchadnezzar was an able and energetic ruler. After pacifying Chaldæa and delivering his subjects from the Elamites, he attempted to attack Nineveh, but failed utterly, being compelled to flee twice, leaving his chariots, baggage, and royal standard to the enemy. Holofernes, Judith's victim, is his general in the Apocrypha.

There were two more Nebuchadnezzars after our hero. Nebuchadnezzar III was King of Babylon under Darius. His real name was Nidintu-Bel, and he passed himself off as the second son of Nabonidus. He tried to recover his independence by revolting against Darius. Defeated by the King of the Persians at Zazan in 521, he shut himself up in Babylon, which Darius besieged and took in 519. Nebuchadnezzar III was put to death. Nebuchadnezzar IV was the Armenian Arakha, who,

almost immediately after Darius's capture of Babylon, presented himself to the Babylonians as another son of Nabonidus. He was defeated by Darius's general Intaphernes and executed in 510.

[33] Lenormant, "Un Patriote babylonien au XVIIIe siècle avant Jésus-Christ", in *Correspondant*, 1874; King, *History of Babylon.*

[34] King, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 271, 321; Maspero, vol. iii, pp. 383 ff., 423.

[35] G. Smith, *History of Assurbanipal*, p. 263. This king, rather than fall living into his Assyrian conqueror's hands, burned himself in his palace. Ashurbanipal gave his cruelty free rein, and this taking of Babylon is famous for the atrocities committed by his troops. See also Maspero, vol. iii, p. 423.

[36] He was Governor of Babylon under Ashurbanipal, and took the title of King at the accession of Ashurbanipal's eldest son, Ashur-etil-ilani.

[37] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. v, and *Études accadiennes*, vol. iii, p. 17. Irrigation was the chief occupation of Chaldæan agriculture. A text regarding the tilling of the ground contains these words: "They draw water to water the earth. They break the ground with the harrow. They fix the irrigation-machinery; they set the bucket going, and draw the water; so they produce a double harvest." "At Babylon", Herodotos says, "they regularly reap the corn twice, and the third crop they allow the beasts to eat as it stands; only by this means do they make it bear grain, for otherwise it would exhaust itself in running to leaf at the expense of the ear."

[38] *Revue d'Assyriologie.* The reliefs of Kuyunjik show date-plantations beside the rivers and canals of Babylonia. There were fifty kinds of date, the generic name being *suluppu* (fullness of mouth). A tablet from the town of Yathaluma (2400 B.C.) is evidence that palm-groves of great extent existed at that time. Their area was reckoned by the number of trees. Artificial fertilization was employed. Male plants were grown separately. The return was assessed by row of trees, the maximum being about 2 cwt. or 4 bushels per tree. This was the great industry of Babylon.

[39] The irrigation-canals, the chief source of agricultural prosperity, were the subject of many servitudes and obligations between land-owners, and their organization led to many law-suits.

[40] The descriptions of Babylon are as numerous as they are imperfect. The best are certainly the royal inscriptions, such as those of the East India House, Borsippa, and the Wadi Brissa. See Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*; Langdon, *Neo-Babylonian*

Inscriptions; and all Koldewey's work at Babylon. Among the ancient authors, we have Herodotos (i, 178 ff.), Diodoros (ii, 8), Quintus Curtius (v, 1), and Strabo (xvi). Ménant (*op. cit.*, p. 261) writes: "We know that the city was surrounded by a wall 480 stades in length. This wall was defended by a moat, and pierced by the Semiramis Gate on the north, the Nineveh Gate on the east, the Chaldæans' Gate on the south, and the Bel Gate on the west. This first enclosure was called Imgur-Bel. Inside it was a second line of walls, Nimitti-Bel, founded by Esarhaddon, which was 370 stades round and contained a hundred gates. The river entered the city at an angle by the north corner, near the Semiramis Gate, and divided it in two, going out by the Bel Gate."

After examining all the Greek texts, Ménant goes on (p. 193): "If we combine the data of Herodotos, Philostratos, Ctesias, Strabo, Diodoros, and Quintus Curtius, we are left with (i) a triple internal circuit (Nimitti-Bel and the walls of the royal fortress), and (ii) a double external circuit, as indicated also by Abydenos and Berosus (that is, the double wall of Imgur-Bel). This latter circuit, 480 stades round, enclosed an area of 200 square miles—that is, Babylon was as large as the Department of the Seine."

[41] Nabopolassar had already begun all these works. Nebuchadnezzar skilfully developed the system of irrigation and inland navigation which the kings of the First Empire had devised two thousand years before.

With this great undertaking Nebuchadnezzar combined another which he carried out in the neighbourhood of Ardericca. Here he dug a new bed for the Euphrates, and controlled the water by means of an enormous artificial basin, the tank of the Sepharsans, from 35 to 40 feet deep. The inner sides of the cuttings and embankments were revetted with hewn stone. Berosus says that it was 40 parasangs round (140 miles) and that by the sluices it gave water to the whole plain.

How should an army of Medes, whose chief strength lay in their cavalry, risk themselves in that labyrinth of water-channels?

On the north, he afterwards connected the Tigris and Euphrates by a great canal for the benefit of the transit trade, and below it he dug four other connecting canals, a hundred yards wide, from which irrigation-ditches ran in all directions.

[42] Interpretation of a text, based on the translation of Langdon, *Les Inscriptions du Wadi-Brissa*, p. 29. The *kiskalgit* was about five miles. In the *Anabasis* Xenophon states that the famous canal protecting Babylon was 70 miles long.

[43] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 173. Since there was no stone

in Babylonia, all building was done, from the earliest times, in brick, save for the door-sockets of temples and public buildings. In Nebuchadnezzar's public works, stone was used only for the paving of the Sacred Way, the Hanging Gardens, and the north wall of the citadel of the royal Palace. Some stone was also used for the foundations of the piers of the great bridge over the Euphrates. There is not one brick on the site of Babylon which does not bear an inscription. Some of these bricks, the finest, are pale yellow; others, the commonest, are red, like our ordinary bricks; others, the hardest, are brown. Some were baked in the fire, and were used for the facings of buildings; others were simply dried in the sun, and were used for the core of walls. All are the same size—about a foot square by three inches thick. These dimensions seem to have been taken as a unit of measure, for Ctesias says that the walls of Babylon were 300 bricks thick. The inscriptions were stamped on the damp clay, before firing, with a wooden die. In laying the bricks, care was taken not to damage the inscriptions. Nebuchadnezzar's bricks bear six or seven or three lines of writing. The most usual inscription is: "I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, the rebuilder of Esagila and Ezida, the eldest son of Nabopolassar, I!" (Ménant, *Babylone*, pl. i, p. 199). For all the bricks of Nebuchadnezzar, see Langdon, *New Babylonian Inscriptions*; Ménant, *Babylone*; Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 61, 84, 86, 138, 141, 208, etc.

[44] Olivier, *Voyage dans l'empire ottoman*, vol. ii, pp. 419–22.

[45] East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar, col. iv, ll. 1–66. See Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 5, 34, 44, 113, for Imgur-Bel, and pp. 138, 150, 168, 173, 312, for Nimitti-Bel. This work gives full information about Imgur-Bel, the outer wall of the city, and ch. xxv, p. 150, about Nimitti-Bel, the inner wall, supposed to have been built by Esarhaddon.

[46] Hdt., i, 178 ff.; Koldewey, ch. i. Compared with other walled cities, ancient and modern, Babylon takes the first place as regards area, Koldewey says.

[47] Koldewey, pp. 1 ff. These towers were 27 feet wide, and stood at intervals of 48 yards. There were ninety to a side, which gives a total of 360. Ctesias says 250 only.

[48] According to the famous description of Herodotos, there were fifty-four miles of outer walls. Ctesias says forty. Koldewey (p. 2) says, on the ground of the excavations done up to the time of writing, eleven. The Great Wall of China is 36 feet high, 25 feet thick, and 1530 miles long—about twenty-nine times as long as Herodotos's wall, which is therefore not quite impossible. Koldewey remarks that the measurements given by Greek authors never agree with the finds.

[49] Wadi-Brissa Inscription, col. v (Langdon, p. 27). No gate has yet been found.

[50] Over 23 feet. All this is from Herodotos and Koldewey, p. 2.

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[51] Herodotos.

[52] The working-quarters of Babylon. At the present day, Hillah is surrounded by a wall enclosing two square miles. The ruins of Babylon are on the eastern bank of the Euphrates. Ruins of a palace, and a great mass of unfired bricks.

[53] " On the top of the wall ", says Herodotos, the wall being 23 feet wide, " there are one-storied houses built on each side, facing each other. Between these buildings there is room for a chariot to drive round the wall. There are a hundred gates."

[54] " Each of the two walls is continued to the river, forming an angle. Then the whole length of both banks of the river is built up with a quay of fired brick. The houses have three or four stories. The streets are straight, and are intersected by other streets which go down to the river. In the wall along the river, small bronze doors have been made, one to every cross-street " (Hdt., i, 180).

[55] Diodoros, in Ménant, p. 263. Philostratos speaks even more concisely of this tunnel. Oppert discovered what he believed to be the two ends of the tunnel; if so, it was in the Royal City, whereas the bridge was in the middle of the town, a little south of Hillah.

[56] " This citadel, of which the palace took up the greater part, was, like the city, encircled by a double rampart. The outer wall of Nebuchadnezzar's town was built of baked bricks cemented with bitumen 25 feet thick. It was reinforced on the outside in the moat and up to the ground-level by a second wall, 11 feet thick. The inner wall, separated from the first by an interval of 37 feet, was built of sun-dried bricks, and was slightly less thick (23 feet), but it was equipped with towers at regular intervals jutting out on both sides. This aggregation of defences was a mile and a half from Esagila, the temple of Bel-Marduk " (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 174–5).

CHAPTER TWO

THE HAND OF BEL [1]

Some hours later, Nebuchadnezzar stood before the gate of the royal city, which opened wide. As his horses came out of the dense shadow, they stopped, dazzled by the sudden relentless brilliance. The bells of their harness tinkled among the tassels of beads and gaudy trappings, while the triple plumes tossed on their rosetted head-stalls. In the gorgeous light, the quarter of Hallab was revealed in all its wretchedness.[2] The flaming rays of the sun fell full on the little flat or conical roofs of the reed and mud houses, which huddled together as if to conceal their dilapidation. Between the picturesque masses of buildings, cobbled lanes squeezed themselves, round sudden turns and under dark tunnels. The squalor of these things was accentuated by the dirt and bustle of the human beings who swarmed among them. Flocks of crows and packs of stray dogs squabbled with beak and teeth over heaps of filth. Under low arches, rickety doors gave a glimpse of stinking passages. At the end of a dark courtyard, bedding brought out of the little oblong rooms scattered vermin abroad and was disinfected by the acrid smoke coming from the bread-oven.

Nebuchadnezzar need not grow sentimental over the poverty and disease of these people—a cosmopolitan collection of slaves and deported foreigners who ought by rights to have been tortured and killed. Their misery was fair payment for the glory of Babylon. If their forced labour left them no hope but death, what did it matter? It enabled them to erect imperishable

AN ENTRANCE OF THE GATE OF ISHTAR

Staatsmuseum, Berlin

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monuments, to execute magnificent works, which should bear witness to the gratitude of the King and people of Babylon to their gods for their victories and the increasing prosperity of the kingdom.

He turned resolutely to the right. The Ishtar Gate, a terrific pile of baked brick, a fortress in itself, towered over the houses. Through the cool shade of its enclosed courts, a constant stream of people poured by the three entrances. Nebuchadnezzar raised his eyes involuntarily, fascinated by the impression of power given by its grim red walls.[3] He frowned to see how time, the Assyrians, and weather had already made their mark on the huge gate, and from his royal mouth a scribe took down the order for its restoration and embellishment: "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon am I! The Gate of Nana" (a name of Ishtar) "I shall build with blue-enamelled bricks for Marduk, my Lord. Strong bulls of copper and mighty serpents shall I set at the thresholds of the doors."[4]

The towers must be higher, and thicker. On the sides facing the town, there should be reliefs and flat designs in baked brick and enamelled brick,[5] representing the dragons of Marduk and the bulls of Adad in rows, one above the other.[6]

Beyond the gate, the Sacred Way ran straight on. The large limestone flags, disjointed in places, glared in the sunlight, in contrast to the softer tone of the enamelled walls. It was like a broad stream of gold flowing between towering cliffs.[7]

Behind the King, the poor quarter, the sudden sight of which in the archway of the gate had made his horses check, had disappeared. The wall was so high and the houses were so low, that there was no longer any sign of that swarming muck-heap. On the right rose the citadel, crowned with battlements and towers. Along the walls, in between the towers, were lions in relief,[8] some white with yellow manes and some yellow

with red manes, all fiercely showing their teeth, stalking one after the other in a long procession. Fixed snarling in the blue walls, they followed them all the way to the blue line of the Euphrates.

On the left, a muffled noise could be heard—the lapping of unseen water between high brick walls, the creak of oars, the songs and shouts of boatmen—all the shut-in life of the Arakhtu Canal, the main commercial artery of the city. Beyond, was a sedately resplendent quarter of massed palaces, with their terraces and their hanging gardens, above which temple-domes and towers rose into the sky. Gleaming enamelled brick gave a fantastic note which made even the foliage gayer. This was the city of Hammurabi,[9] now the elegant quarter of Babylon, Merkes, where the high officials and dignitaries of the kingdom had their residence.

But now Nebuchadnezzar saw, to his right, the ziggurat, a geometrical figure wildly exaggerated, so enormous that when seen from far off it was alarming. It seemed to shoot into the sky. This was the sacred pyramid where, from the beginning of time and to all eternity, Bel slept, the creator and organizer of the world.[10] Forms and colours rose skywards like stiff, immovable waves of stone. In its colossal shadow, a host of chapels consecrated to the many attributes of the sovereign deity burrowed into the foundations of the pyramid.

A little further off was a splendid dome covered with plates of gold—Esagila,[11] the first work of the divine creation. " Before any reed had sprouted, or any tree had grown, or any city had been built, or any men had gathered together, then Esagila was set up in the midst of the Ocean, on the hurdle which Marduk wove on the face of the waters." [12] From Eridu, Hammurabi had transported it to Babylon. All the great captains and the glorious kings had come there, that their deeds might be consecrated and their victories crowned by

a divine enthronement. Dungi, King of Ur, who in 2400 dared to loot its treasury, Agum-kakrime, the Kassite king, who in 1700 recorded his embellishments of the temple in an inscription, Shalmaneser II of Assyria, who entered Babylon as a conqueror in 860, but enriched the Temple of Bel-Marduk with gifts, Merodach-baladan II, King of Babylon, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal—all had displayed their munificence in restoring and adorning Esagila, the House with the Lofty Summit.[13]

Nebuchadnezzar knew that his father Nabopolassar had meant to do still better, but it was he who would put the final seal on the work of gratitude of his great forerunners, that the splendour of the temple of the god who was about to enthrone him should speak throughout the ages of the splendour which, he knew, would mark his own reign.

Above the gracefully swaying palms, rose the grand, austere walls of Esagila, to which so much ambition and so much greed had in the course of centuries made pilgrimage. The crow-stepped battlements of the topmost parapet stood against the blue sky as if to mark the heavenly way and to lead men to eternity.[14]

Within the rectangle of the high embattled walls, 1,050 yards by 390, there were wide deserted courts, fields, and luxuriant gardens, over which the palm-tops swung like censers. Between the towers, the walls had an ornament of broad panels of enamelled brick, pilasters, and grooves.[15] This wall shut off the vast city of the gods [16] from temporal things, that nothing of human vanity might come to disturb the voice of prayer. From inside, above the palm-trees and the domes, one saw a great square of sky like a precious stone set in the jagged red frame of the battlements.

In the fields and gardens, Nebuchadnezzar saw a number of people whom, from their pleated robes, the

metal horns on their headgear, and the bows of ribbon on the backs of their necks, he knew to be priests. They came and went, swaying slightly in time to the psalms which they sang. On all the various types of countenance, which showed that the priesthood was recruited from every part of the Empire, he was struck by the same expression of ecstasy. Bel-Marduk had shaped them all in one mould, binding their ambitions to his own, and so ensuring the cohesion and power of the kingdom.[17]

Nebuchadnezzar stopped his chariot before a broad stair which led to the central terrace of the city, a mighty pile, twelve hundred brick-lengths to a side, at the far end of which the rising mass of the *kigal* of Etemenanki [18] stood as if its retired position were intended to accentuate the height of its bold lines. On the terrace, there was a whole town of sanctuaries, hypostyle porticoes, and gates. The imaginations of the young priests trained here could not stray from the serenity of the stately court whose only luxury consisted of very simple architectural lines and panels of polychrome bricks, shining with a heavenly lustre in the sunlight. Cells set against the surrounding wall stood open to the faithful like the guest-rooms of a divine caravanserai. At the back, on another terrace, the Temple of Marduk seemed to fill a great part of the sky with its golden dome.[19]

In the court, Nebuchadnezzar was awaited by a procession of priests, a dense throng of ascetic bodies rolled up in robes of many flounces, with worn old faces on skinny necks craning at the prince with curiosity and anxiety. Among the first rank was Nergalorosor, the chief of the college, the High Priest, whose word was as good as the King's in Babylon. It was he who had saved the crown from the intrigues and ambitions awakened by the absence of the heir. Would he show a proper gratitude to the god and his priests, this handsome youth whose brow bore the

frown of an unconquerable pride and whose jaw was set so very firm?

One glance told Nebuchadnezzar all that he might expect by flattering his god, serving him to make use of him, heaping him and his temples with riches. He only had to look at the man before him, whose face revealed the power of the priestly office which he exercised in order to keep alive in the people the unshakable faith, the lofty, serene indifference, the peace of soul which made it possible for the strong to rule.

Behind the priests, between two battlemented towers rising above the adjoining walls, was an arch, severe in the plainness of its crude brick. The shadow of the door, opening on to unfathomable depths, was full of mystery. At once it attracted and inspired religious terror. Beyond, there were massive colonnades, disappearing in darkness. Nebuchadnezzar entered the sanctuary,[20] followed by Nergalorosor and the procession of priests. Behind the High Priestess of Marduk, whose breast was bare above a shawl with enormous fringes, came the *kalus*, who could appease the hearts of angry gods with their drums, while the *pa-azu* walked solitary before his troop of soothsayers and magicians, all the *igi-dus* and *abkallus* who knew the will of the gods and interpreted dreams.[21]

They went into a last court, and the priests took their place in silence round a brick altar in the middle, opposite the cella containing the god. There Nebuchadnezzar went in alone with Nergalorosor. In the vestibule, the awe-inspiring darkness was made still deeper by the black asphalt with which the walls were painted, while perspectives were emphasized by white lines. At every step between the bare, black walls, the darkness increased.[22] Footfalls sounded dead within the thick masonry, and the walkers were like dim ghosts in the gloom. But one long streak of light from the door fell on the far end, where, under the great golden dome set with sapphires, it gleamed on

metal and precious stones. In a rectangular niche, the statue of Marduk stood over the dragon which was his attribute,[23] motionless and majestic in solid gold. Under the tiara, laden with gems, the huge ears were open to human supplications, as symbols of the widest understanding. On the scornful mouth, over the curling beard, lay a faint, mysterious smile.[24]

MARDUK THE CREATOR AND HIS DRAGON.
From the excavations of Babylon.

Face to face with the colossus, which towered above him in all its sixteen feet,[25] Nebuchadnezzar at once strove to read in its features the aspirations and secret thoughts which his own mortal ancestors had brought to it. But the eyes of the god looked too high for him to meet them. Perhaps Marduk, in this dark temple, had his secret, no less than the sphinx, of which he had heard in Egypt, in the bright sunlight

amid the golden sand. Perhaps those lips, smiling but closed, concealed nothing but the vanity of the ambition of the men who sought to know their destiny. No, there could be no glory without faith in the heart of men. Nebuchadnezzar raised his arms in supplication before the statue, opened his hands wide, asking all gifts of the god, and then bent his knees and prostrated himself, face to the ground, on the flags which had been worn by many knees.[26]

"I have trusted in the god Marduk; I have taken the hem of his robe, and he has seen into the secret desires of my heart," [27] said the King, crawling humbly along the floor to the statue, whose feet he kissed.

Then he rose to his full height, still very small beside the great statue. He slowly moved his right hand upwards along the robe of the god. The cold of the metal made him shudder. Still his fingers went up and up, now and again curling round the embroidery of jewels. High up, but within the reach of men, the god's right hand hung inertly, resting on the *harpe* [28] with which he had delivered the world from chaos. With a sudden impulse of pride, Nebuchadnezzar reached up on tiptoe to the hand which dispensed the divine unction, the touch of which alone could consecrate his accession to the throne,[29] and seized it in a quick grip, as if to impress his will upon it. Then he again prostrated himself at the god's feet, and murmured in a low voice: "I lift up my hand, I prostrate myself before the Lord of Lords, and my voice goes up even to Marduk, the Sublime." His voice became almost humble as he asked for the reward of his self-abasement: "Marduk, mighty lord of my submission, be gracious to me. Lengthen my life to the furthest days. Grant me a sixfold progeny, and make my throne stable and my sword victorious for ever!" [30]

He went out into the court, where the priests were waiting for him in semi-obscurity. The sun was already setting, and things were growing dim in the

sacred precinct. On the crest of the tawny walls, the delicate outlines of the battlements stood against a sky of amethyst. The soft voices of the priests rose in prayer in a gentle, dreamy rhythm. Round the brick altar,[31] the servants of the god had brought bulls, gazelles, kids, and heifers. Nergalorosor held out the sacred knife to the new King. As the god's representative on earth, Nebuchadnezzar must shed with his own hand the blood of the victims offered in gratitude to the god from whom he had received all power. With a quick movement, he cut the throat of a young gazelle. Graceful in its last movements, the pretty thing fell on the flags, and its blood spread in a red pool at the King's feet. Nebuchadnezzar was filled with a rapture of adoration and pride. With hands lifted to the sky, he spoke a prayer, ardent but contained:

> "Marduk, be propitious to the King whom thou hast raised up, whose name thou hast glorified, into whose hands thou hast given justice. I, Lord, I bless thee. I am the creature of thy hands. Thou hast created me, thou hast entrusted to me the kingship over the hosts of men, according to thy will, Lord, who hast subjugated their tribes. Raise up once more thy supreme empire, spread the worship of thy godhead, awake it in my heart according to thy desire, and so may my life be consecrated to thee." [32]

Before the gate of the city of Marduk, in the shadow of the red wall, the people was waiting in patience, silently stirred by the mystery at which it guessed. When the King appeared in all the splendour of his youthful glory, an imperceptible thrill went through the long, dim line of gaudy shawls pressing at the foot of the glowing walls. Not a cry, not a bravo—it was not yet time for acclamations. It was true that Marduk, by the clasp of his divine hand, had sealed the contract binding the people to the young prince, adding his supreme investiture to that of hereditary

right and popular choice; but it was over at Borsippa that the insignia and attributes of the power would be conferred on Nebuchadnezzar by the grace of the god Nabu, the Orderer of All Things, the Captain of the Universe.

Along the Sacred Way, where the guards forced a passage through the silent throng, the long procession straggled in an indescribable disorder of floating robes and coloured shawls. On his chariot, the King, heedless of all the present excitement, was thinking of the future. To Babylon, which gave him power, he must bring omnipotence. What was the use of reigning in

A Gate of Esagila.
Gold plaque from the supposed burial-place of Nabopolassar in the Palace of Babylon.

Babylon, if Babylon did not rule over all the other great cities, if its wealth and luxury and magnificence did not declare to the ends of the earth and to all eternity the glory of him, Nebuchadnezzar? With fire and sword, but also with hod and trowel, he would adorn his city with a renown which should survive the attacks of its enemies and of time alike. He saw in his mind's eye wild, victorious expeditions, and stones reared up to the sky.

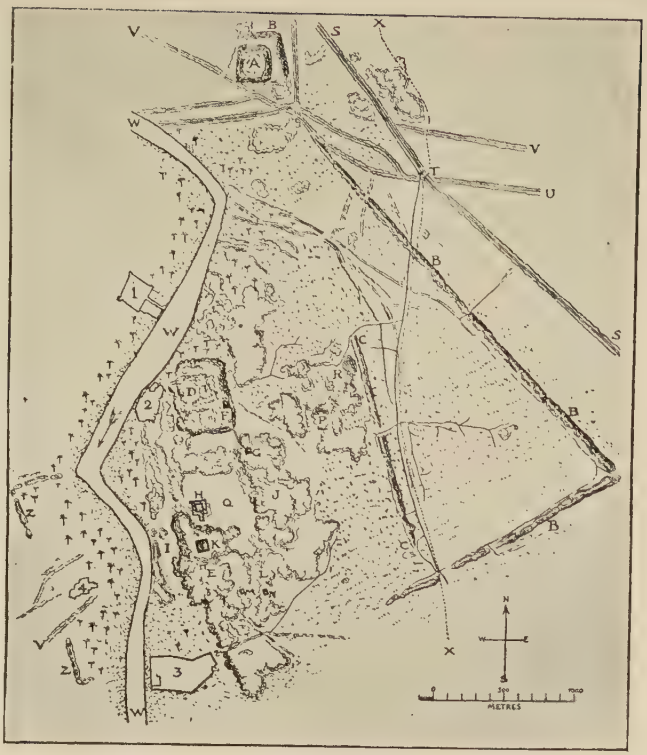
Now they were through the Urash Gate [33] and crossing the walled-in Euphrates by the stone bridge which, like the monumental gateway, had been built by Nabopolassar.[34] Beyond the bridge, the Sacred

Way ran on, a little worse paved, between walls which were a little more dilapidated. Then came a double gate, and beyond it more superimposed terraces, on which stood the domed temple of Nabu and its seven-storied ziggurat—the tower of Borsippa.[35] On their immovable foundations, block rose on regular block, each smaller than the last, until the rose-coloured summit lost itself in the rosy sky. Low on the horizon, the fading disk of the sun looked enormous, and in its last subdued light the tower seemed to be, not a real thing, but the exaggerated reflection of something

Ziggurat with a Dragon, bearing the Emblem of Nebuchadnezzar. Engraved stone in the British Museum, No. 90,850.

in another world. The bright colours of the seven stories, black, white, purple, blue, scarlet, silver, and gold, were softened; in the magical evening light they seemed at first sight to be all of one tone, but

* References in the Plan of Babylon: A, The mound Babil. B, Outer city wall. C, Inner city wall. D, The Kasr, on which the Citadel and Palace stood. F, Emakh, the Temple of Ninmakh. G, Temple of Ishtar of Agade. H, Etemenanki, the Tower of Babylon. I, Ancient bed of the Euphrates. J, Merkes. K, Esagila, the Temple of Marduk. M, Temple Z, of some unknown deity. N, Epatutila, the Temple of Ninib. U, Former bed of the Nil Canal. VV, Ancient ruined canals. W, Euphrates. Z, Remains of walls. The other letters and figures refer to sites not mentioned in the text.—Trs.



PLAN OF BABYLON IN ITS PRESENT STATE
From Koldewey. For references, see note * on p. 46

ENVIRONS OF BABYLON
From J. Oppert

[face p. 46

gradually one perceived the skilful harmonies of an infinite variety of tints.

Since the beginning of the world, it had stood there, dominating all Babylonia, the great tower of Borsippa.[36] Dreams alone could have planned it so lofty and so unreal. There it stood, immovable, a gigantic symbol both of human aspirations to the mystery of the beyond and of the boundlessness of the luminous upper hemisphere visible to men, a huge link between earth and heaven. It was here that all the peoples of the earth, forgetting their conflicts for a time, united in one impulse of gratitude and love for the godhead, had come to work at the colossal task of building, prayer being their one and only language,[37] until pride divided them again and varied their speech.[38]

The last golden light faded from the topmost battlements of the highest towers. The summit of the ziggurat alone shone in a sky which was already blue with night. It suddenly grew cool. Nebuchadnezzar shivered. He thought of the ghosts of his great ancestors wandering about the dark terraces—his ancestors, who before him had received the insignia of a fleeting kingship. All the past seemed to arise from the gulf of the ages, from the mythical days of King Alalgar, of whom nothing is known save that he was chosen by the mysterious god who had created all things, to be the shepherd of the Babylonian people. He had reigned ten *sars*, or thirty-six thousand years.[39] How many others, after him, had made use, for their own greater glory of the sceptre, the *harpe*, and the crown conferred by Nabu in that temple! Nebuchadnezzar would surpass them all.

The young King followed Nergalorosor into the temple, overpowered by its mass. At the threshold, to right and left, two great copper bulls guarded the heavy doors of cedar edged with gold.[40] Crowned with their great horns, they stood in a stiff, hieratic pose, as if waiting to bar the way to the faithful. On

their silver-plated bodies,[41] dazzling lines of emeralds, sardonyxes, and sapphires outlined the muscles, tense as if in readiness for a last stand. The darkness of this sanctuary, where a whole past of glory dwelt, drew Nebuchadnezzar like an abyss at the bottom of which his future had been written down since the beginning. In the gloom, relieved only by the light from the open door, the statue of Nabu caught the last glimmer of the day. On the floor of beaten silver, it stood alone, against the back wall, huge and rigid with its great head and the long beard curling over its breast.[42] On either side of its shoulders, ribbons met, hanging from the tall tiara, round which, as if to enhance the mystery, two golden horns were curved.[43] With arms crossed over his long fringed robe, Nabu had stood there for ages which appalled, praying to his father Marduk, oppressing the soul of the men at his feet with his air of thinking, right beyond them, of unknown worlds. In the placid countenance, the dead, fixed gaze was not to be borne; he met the dumb inquiry in Nebuchadnezzar's eyes with a sovereign detachment in which there was something unconscious and inevitable.

For a moment, Nebuchadnezzar recoiled. Was this all that awaited him at the end of the day which was to have brought the seal of divine approval to the dreams of fortune and glory which fermented in his impatient heart? This was not his god, the god of success and wealth, this smiling, golden bogie which seemed to accept his youthful enthusiasm and his prayers with ironic indifference. He wanted to flee; his pride could not endure the atmosphere of discouragement and fear. But, like a loadstone, lying on a stool before the god, the sceptre, the *harpe*, the tiara, and the rod of command held him, drew him, and he slowly stepped forward to meet the *urigallu* who came out of the shadow, the messenger of the god. With an assured gesture, the King stretched out his hand as if to

demand the insignia as his right, but the *urigallu* struck him with the back of his hand, and, pulling his ears, forced him to kneel before the statue.[44]

Nebuchadnezzar reflected that other proud and grasping men before him, for ages and ages, had humbled themselves in this place, and that no empire had survived which had denied its traditions or abolished the great traces of its past. But his pride still lived, in all his abasement. "I have not sinned, Nabu, Lord of Lands, I have not forgotten the rites."[45]

Then the *urigallu* held the insignia to him, and his response satisfied the King's heart: "Be without fear. Nabu will bless thee for ever, he will destroy thine enemies, he will beat down thine adversaries."

After that, he was unconscious of the second blow dealt by the *urigallu*, although it drew tears from his eyes (indeed, even these were of good omen). Standing up before the golden statue, whose eyes, fixed since the beginning of time, no longer frightened him, he chanted in a loud voice a hymn of fervent gratitude. On the threshold, all the priests stretched out their hands in prayer, and poured forth the joyful strain of a royal Hallelujah.

"May Nabu the Lord, the First-born of Ashur . . . magnify thy kingship.
May Nabu the Illustrious, the beloved of the goddess Aruru . . . magnify thy name for ages.
May Nabu the Magnificent, the Scribe of the Universe, write thee on his tablet.
May he keep thy life . . . a judge filled with counsel,
And may kings submit themselves to thy name."[46]

By now the sky was one deep blue, lit with millions of stars, to which the song of glory went up, and, though night had come, it seemed to Nebuchadnezzar that he had gained yet another victory, that of the faith of his fathers over doubt, of light over darkness.

Lost in dreams, he passed through the various

quarters of the temple to the ziggurat. On the walls, the fluting of the pilasters appeared as if cut with a more incisive line. Everything looked harder and clearer, and it seemed that with the sun the human soul of the divine city had departed. All was silent and spectral. Of the chants of victory, the clamours of fear, the cries of triumph or agony which the multitudinous generations had sent up here, nothing remained. There was not a sound in the calm blue night. Only in imagination did Nebuchadnezzar hear the heavy breathing of the thousands of prisoners whom he would presently harness here, to restore these temples, to set newer and higher stones on the old stones, even as his glory would be higher than that of his predecessors.

He had now arrived at the foot of the ziggurat, which was so high that it seemed as if nothing but its mass could have supported it. He looked up, and at the sight of those heaped terraces felt that he was at the bottom of an abyss, very far from the stars sparkling enigmatically above.

But here, sheltered under the shadow of the bottom story, was the school of his childhood, the library of the Temple of Borsippa,[47] which, he had been told, had saved the world from barbarism. Ashurbanipal and Sennacherib had found here the best of the works which had been the glory of their libraries of Nineveh and Dur-Sharrukin. How interminable he had thought them, the long shelves which held the countless tablets of clay—manuals of science, astronomy, mathematics, mineralogy, botany, zoology, legal documents, too, and innumerable works of history—the whole annals of the kingdom! The tablets were stacked in their thousands, some being thousands of years old and not yet out-of-date, although the library welcomed modern knowledge. What a bad scholar he had been, as unwilling to read the cuneiform characters as to draw them with his stylus![48] Surely

it was better to build monuments, cities, and empires, than to rummage in the dust of past ages. He would have been inclined to laugh at the thought of his angry revolts against his masters, only he remembered how one teacher, when he had been particularly intractable, had taken him into a small closed room, and there shown him an empty place at the very end of a shelf, high up near the cedar-wood ceiling, next to the tablets which told of the glory of his father Nabopolassar. This was the place set apart for the annals of his own reign, and it had seemed very small.

Alone once more with Nergalorosor, he climbed the terraces towards the ziggurat. It was a limpid night, and the transparency of the sky gave it a look of depth which was queer and magical. Nebuchadnezzar showed pale in the hard, cold light. A vague emotion filled his heart, and he slackened his pace. In front of him, the high sides of the ziggurat rose, a solid, fantastic mass. The shadows added to their length, and the wan light accentuated the sharp ridges of the stories, which rose, ever decreasing in size, to the last platform, lost in the sky, the tabernacle of the god which men had attempted to raise to his own height. As by a sudden illumination of his heart, Nebuchadnezzar was struck by the grand order which governed the movements of the stars on the celestial path.[49] Rather than in the golden statue before which he had lately abased himself, surely godhead must dwell in the heavens as the sole and sovereign principle of creation, the divine substance of life, and the stars must be manifestations of it visible to man. So, too, the other supposed gods were mere attributes of it. For the vulgar, no doubt, it was just now, in the temple, at the feet of the statues of stone and gold and silver, that he had received the divine decree, the consecration of his kingship, the insignia and the dignities; but he himself knew that it was only to-night that he would obtain from the sky the presages which would decide

the future of that kingship, his own destiny and that of his country.

A fervent hymn rose from the King's heart to his lips, evidence of a syncretism and a monotheism which were still unconscious:

"Lord, thy countenance is the sky.
Thy shape is the god.
Thy two eyes are Enlil and Ninlil.
The genies of thine eyes are Gula and Belitilit.
The irises of thine eyes, Lord, are the rays of Sin.
The lids of thine eyes are the light of Shamash.
Thy chin is Ishtar of the Stars.
Anu and Antum are thy lips.
Thy word, thy palace, Lord, are the dome of heaven.
The crown of thy head is Adad.
Thy brow is Shala.
Thy neck is Marduk.
Thy throat is Zarpanit.
Thy breast is Nabu the Seer.
Thy hips are Lugal." [50]

In the shadow of the door, white-robed figures furtively appeared, rose before the King like phantoms, and then, respecting his meditation, vanished into the darkness. The mystery which haunted him was silently calling. These were the men who, from observing the sky and the movements of the stars, had discovered the natural laws of the world, determined the seasons, divided the ages, and gone back to the origins of all things. If they could foretell, with absolute certainty, eclipses,[51] comets, and all the regular revolutions of the heavens which were the manifestations of the divine will, surely they could see with still greater certainty the future of men, peoples, and empires on this earth.[52] If the mysterious but co-ordinated evolutions of the stars and their position in the heavenly vault exercised a sovereign influence on nature and the progress of the seasons, the fate of man, his life and health, could not escape that influence. The stars were the great con-

trollers of human happenings as of the movements of the material world. And Nebuchadnezzar trembled at the prospect of hearing their decree.

In the wake of the white phantoms, the King, followed by Nergalorosor, climbed the stairs which rose alongside the terribly thick walls, barely visible in the darkness. Only the slow, regular patter of sandals on bricks broke the silence. The flickering, smoky light of the torches which some of the priests carried occasionally showed, beyond the swaddled, gliding figures, a wide wooden door, closed on unknown things, the gleam of a heavy copper knocker, awaiting some mysterious summons, or a doorway, one on every story, opening on long vaulted halls.

On the last story but one, the procession entered a dark hall. Nebuchadnezzar saw the famous astrological tablets arranged round the walls, on shelves which seemed endless. Formidable little tablets, which had already bent many a royal will! In the face of the unfavourable omens which had been interpreted with their aid, even fierce Sennacherib, on the point of joining battle with the men of Susa, had had to retreat. And the struggles which had taken place to obtain possession of them!

Nebuchadnezzar leaned over the lower shelves. There were seventy tablets in a row, all alike. In reply to his mute query, Nergalorosor said that these were the essential part of the great classical work which was the basis of all astrology—the famous Tables of Sargon,[53] which the great Chaldæan monarch had caused to be drawn up after uniting all Chaldæa under his sceptre about 2750 B.C. Like a monotonous litany, Nergalorosor gave their titles: *Omens of the Sun and Moon when both are visible together;*[54] *Omens of the Moon;*[55] *Omens of the Moon when it is visible on the 30th of the month of Kislev;*[56] *Omens of the Moon when its appearance on the 28th of the month is the same as it had been on the 1st.* On another shelf were: *Various celestial*

omens ; Influence of the fixed stars ; Influence of the fixed stars and planets ; Movement and influence of the planet Venus ; Other influences of the planet Venus. Higher up, there were : *Influences of the general state of the heavens ; Omens of each month.* And, on the two last shelves : *Omens of solar eclipses ; Omens of the Sun and Moon when both are visible together ; Omens of the Moon alone ; Omens of the lunar halo ; Omens of the planet Nabu ; Omens of the planet Marduk.*[57]

Every patch of the wall was taken up by stacks of tablets covered with close writing. From that compilation, based on the observations of thousands of years,[58] the priests had been able to draw up on the last tablets, which Nergalorosor was now showing to the King, " the omens of evil and their contraries, the signs of joy or sorrow for the heart of men ".

Since Sargon's time, the Chaldæan astronomers had certainly made new discoveries, thanks to such important inventions as the sundial[59] and the water-clock, and regarded the ancient tablets as a little out-of-date in their scientific foundation, but the rules set down thereon, which were doubtless received from the gods in distant times, before the Deluge, for the interpretation of celestial phenomena, still held good.[60] To reply to the anxious questionings of kings and common mortals alike, the priests still had recourse to the old tablets, the astrological principles of which were always true, even if their astronomical theory had been eclipsed by the advance of science.[61]

In the halls in which the little tablets stood in rows and rows, the keys to the great planetary spaces and also to dreams, there was a constant murmuring and whispering, from the host of priests and magicians who had come from every quarter of the earth to steep themselves in the learning of Chaldæa, to be initiated into the mysteries of astrology, and to learn to read in the book of the sky the destinies of men.[62] In the half-darkness of rooms extending into obscurity, under

the old cedar-wood ceilings, they indefatigably noted down on their wax tablets all the signs which appeared in the sky,[63] other than phenomena already regularly observed. If the sun and moon disappeared suddenly behind clouds, if they were surrounded by a red halo, if on certain summer nights stars rained down on to the earth, if new constellations appeared, it was for these wise, hardworking men with the keen eyes and minds to observe, to note, to understand those warnings of the gods, and, by the data collected, interpreted, and classified from age to age, to establish the rules which should guide kings and wise men in the conduct of human affairs.[64]

Nebuchadnezzar spoke to one venerable scribe. He told the King that, ever since he had entered the temple, he had constantly watched the storms [65] which sprang up and rumbled on the horizon. He had methodically summed up his observations, checking those which were uncertain and discarding those which were incorrect, and was now writing a work which gave at length all the forecasts which should be drawn for human affairs from " chance thunder ", " thunder of the earth ",[66] and " thunder of Bel ". He solemnly added : " If the god Adad roars in the month of Nisan, disturbance is to be feared in the land ; if he does so in the month of Iyyar, war will break out ; if in Siwan, the harvest will be good ; if in Tammuz, it will be magnificent ; if in Kislev, cities will be destroyed ; if in Shebat, clouds of grasshoppers will invade the country ; if in Adar, the land will revolt against its King."

While the old astrologer was showing off his ingenious observations and his wise deductions, with the longwindedness of one who lives for a single enthusiasm, far from the storms of life, Nebuchadnezzar pursued his own thoughts. His mind was not satisfied by all these material, concrete conclusions which the magicians and priests drew from their

observations. It was all very well for common people to be content with the sidereal pantheism which brought in a god to explain natural phenomena which were beyond their limited understanding. Here were splendid possibilities for moulding the spirit of the masses, for unleashing popular passions at the bidding of a stronger will and a clearer mind, and for binding the people to the destiny of him who "lived their dreams", who realized their ideals and, to compensate them for their disillusionment, asked the heavens for new hopes. But, in all that welter of deities, understandable to the popular mind and useful to the priests, there could be neither beauty nor order, any more than in the material sky, unless a supreme intelligence governed their relative rank and their activities.[67] Surely the documents accumulated here for centuries proved that the stars, like men, obeyed not chance, but an unalterable fate, predetermined by a single, supreme force.[68] Surely the very sympathy which bound earthly things to things above, the lower earth to the sky, bore witness to a divine unity, from which every living thing emanated, the attributes of which were so many gods drawn from its own substance. The stars were its true outward manifestations. The priests of Babylon had had the science, and also the cunning, to draw horoscopes from it to satisfy the anxiety of men faced by the problem of destiny. That divine first principle, one in its nature and multiple in its manifestations, was Ilu, God himself, whose essence was so vast that he could not be portrayed [69] or described, so as to receive the adoration of the populace, but who, as Nebuchadnezzar well knew, had chosen Babylon to be the capital of his kingdom on this earth. The very name of the city, Bab-Ilu, the Gate of God, proved that he had chosen it.

The priests respected the King's absorption. Round the synthetic principle thus revealed to him by a sudden inspiration, the legends which had peopled

the dreams of his boyhood fell into place. He suddenly saw their fanciful diversity as simply the logical succession of phenomena which had governed the creation of the world. From the chaos in which the whole of heaven and earth had been mingled, and which had been the scene of the gigantic exploits of the first pair, Anshar and Kishar, were born, after many days, the three, Anu, Bel, and Ea,[70] the holy trinity, three gods in one god, of whom Bel was the creative principle of the world and lord of the brightest of the planets, Bel (Jupiter). From that triad proceeded the succession of divine emanations which, to be accessible to men, assumed the form of stars, celestial bodies which mortals could worship—Shamash, the sun, the son of Sin, the spirit of God penetrating and directing the universe and making it live ; Sin, the moon, the son of Enlil ; Bin, the firmament, the son of Anu ; then the five planets, Adad, Nergal, Ishtar, Marduk, and Nabu ; and after them generation after generation of lower gods, ranked, according to their place in the pedigree, in a hierarchy whose secrets only the priestly caste could penetrate and unveil.[71]

These deductions were quite as reasonable as those, based on the same observations, which had made it possible to lay down fixed, universal bases for weights and measures and that scientific division of time, justly admired by all antiquity, by means of which the course of the ages could be traced back to the Deluge and the Creation, without any alteration in the order of days from the earliest times.[72] What an amount of observation, knowledge, wisdom, too, lay behind the division of the ecliptic into the twelve equal parts which constituted the Zodiac, and the determination of its catasterisms, the establishment of the precession of the equinoxes,[73] and the division of the circle into 360 equal degrees,[74] of the degree into sixty minutes, and of the minute into sixty seconds ! Why, the science of these men proved its supremacy by its

very empiricism! Their knowledge of astronomy had shown them that they could not make the solar year fit the lunar months exactly;[75] so they decided to add a thirteenth month, which they called an "incident" of Adar, to the end of every sixth year.

Nergalorosor roused the King from his abstraction. A last stair rose along the wall to the very top of the ziggurat, feebly lighted by the torches of the priests, which flickered and danced in the night breeze. On the highest platform, the light of the moon seemed dazzling. Babylon was as if petrified in the cold, hard light, a vast, spectral city. The frail shadows of the palms lay across the terraces. The heavy walls and towers rose out of a white mist, which was denser over the Euphrates and the canals, and against that impalpable ground they looked light and unreal. Down below, the dome of the Temple of Nabu seemed as if crushed by the blue radiance of the moon. The noises of the city came up muffled and distant, mingled with the melancholy cry of night-birds. It was cold. The mist rose slowly like a silent tide and enfolded the ziggurat, shutting it off from the earth and leaving it alone in the sky. Nebuchadnezzar gazed in long ecstasy at the heavenly vault, the vast immaterial firmament on which, amid thousands of pulsing stars, his fate had been written by the gods.[76]

On the platform, a huge gnomon[77] of white marble stood above a broad round table, on which its shadow, obedient to the sun, had marked the hours during the day. Near by, water dripped in a water-clock,[78] its drops lightly tapping out the sixty minutes of each hour, and, as it was turned over twelve times, the twelve hours of the day after the twelve hours of the night. Nergalorosor held out a long telescope,[79] and on the glass lens the King saw the firmament suddenly enlarged, showing the crowded canvas of constellations all distinct and luminous. Nergalorosor obligingly enumerated those which we call the Dragon and

the Little Bear in the north, the Great Bear and the Lion, with the star Regulus, in the north-west, Hercules in the east, the Scorpion in the south-east, with its star Antares glinting red like those of Boötes, nearer the zenith, and the Serpent, Ophiuchus, the Lyre (with Vega), and the Swan in the north-east. He also pointed out the visible planets—Adar (Saturn) in the Scorpion, and Marduk (Jupiter) between the Claws of the Scorpion. Ishtar (Venus) and Nergal (Mars) were invisible.[80]

Nebuchadnezzar grew impatient. He demanded to be shown, without further delay, what he was to expect from each of the luminous points which he saw on the face of the sky. In a slow, solemn voice, Nergalorosor translated the decree of the gods. "If Marduk,[81] who measures the progress of the Sun, shines at night with a light like the light of day, if there are broad dark bands on his shining body, which make him look like a two-edged sword, it is because, in the reign which begins to-day so happily, there can never be a foreign master in Chaldæa. Tyranny is divided against itself; justice prevails; a strong king rules. The King is firmly established in his rights. Obedience and tranquillity reign everywhere in his land.

"Furthermore, one of the four royal stars, Shara (Regulus), presides over the sign of the Lion, and confirms that sign of strength and justice.[82]

"Somewhat above Marduk, in the Scorpion which governs Judæa, if Adar (Saturn) shines softly between the zenith and the eastern horizon, it is because a danger threatens the King from that side, and it is because cruel conflicts will arise from his inheritance."

But over there, below the horizon, where was Shamash, the Sun-god, the symbol of wealth and glory? In the constellation of the Twins. "The meaning?" asked Nebuchadnezzar. "It is the sign of influence which those about the King will have over him," was Nergalorosor's humble reply. "But this

evening", he added hastily, "the setting of Shamash was so resplendent that that influence can only have the happiest results for the King, which will add to the unparalleled glory of his reign; and gold will flow plentifully all through the kingdom."

Nabu (Mercury), Nebuchadnezzar's patron, was invisible to-night. At the moment, he was in the other hemisphere, midway between glory, symbolized by Shamash, and defeat, symbolized by Nergal (Mars), who was in the Bull. "From that equidistance one may infer", said Nergalorosor, "that the gods authenticate the consultation now given by Nergalorosor, whose god is Nergal, to King Nebuchadnezzar, whose god is Nabu. It also foretells that after the death of the King the conquests promised him by Marduk will be preserved, and that the balance of the kingdom will be maintained by his successor. But it is true that Nergal, down there in the Bull, announces that the King's health will undergo sore trials, at the end of his life, and that a congestion will affect and endanger his brain."

Nebuchadnezzar then scanned the sky for Ishtar, the goddess of love. She had been visible a short time ago, but to-night she was hidden just below the horizon. "Ishtar, in conjunction with Shamash, the Sun, promises the King faithfulness in love and satisfaction in his children." Nebuchadnezzar was glad. His heart burned with a youthful passion for his new wife, Nitocris, from whom he hoped for an heir.

But what was foretold by Sin, the Moon,[83] the pale, mysteriously changing deity worshipped by Shumuadamqa, his mistress? "He is in Sagittarius," replied Nergalorosor. "Being there, he vouches for the love of the King's people, which is eager for great adventures, skilful diplomacy, and religious pomps. But at the end of his reign, a difference will grow up between the people and the King, and other things will come to trouble his chief ambitions."

Always the same idea of ultimate defeat, of collapse, abandonment, and death, ever recurring! Would the immortality which he yearned to conquer for his name and his kingdom through future ages be denied to him? But his will, which demanded so much glory, did not yield. At the bottom of his heart, he felt a kind of hateful panic, and his instinct rebelled against that destiny of decline. By his side, the water-clock dripped steadily. The faint sound, the monotonous, continual running out of the minutes, made him shiver under the black sky. So a day would come—what day?—when the light drops of water would carry away for the last time all memory of the wealth, the conquests, the victories, the empires, and the whole of that great work which was to be his. They would no longer tap out their indifferent song. A pitiless future would see the slow demolition of all that he had built up. Slowly, with his pale, set face raised towards the stars which erred, in that they would not assure him of all that he could do, he stepped back, with an instinctive gesture of defence, as before the menace of a murderer. Murder his dreams! He rebelled.

No, nothing would be refused him. His sovereign pride shook off his gloomy imaginings. He grasped Nergalorosor's shoulders imperiously, and in a low voice, through which he could hear the quick beating of his heart, he flung in the face of the priest the question which obsessed him: "What fate have the stars in store for my kingdom and the neighbouring kingdoms, those kingdoms which I must enslave to build the glory of Babylon on their ruins?"

Nergalorosor had retreated a few paces before the pale face which demanded the truth, the whole present and the whole future as well. He gazed long at the sky. His eyes moved from one constellation to another. Then the omens took form in his somewhat flustered brain. "The fair land of the King's birth, Chaldæa, is under the sign of the Virgin. Tyre

and Sidon, his enemies, are under the Lion. Therefore they will be brought into bondage by Babylon and bent under its law."

"And Egypt?"

"Under the Twins. It will therefore know defeat and invasion, but it will not be annihilated, nor brought into bondage."

"Arabia?"

Nergalorosor, with his eyes still fixed on the distant stars, was suddenly silent. Words stuck in his throat, constricted by fear. Nebuchadnezzar strode towards him. He must know, and knowledge must answer to his desire. The distress of the old priest did not move him. He must know the whole of fate, at once. His shaking hands crushed the shoulders of the magician. The latter's will slowly relaxed under the dominion of that fierce importunity, and his bloodless lips whispered into the serene night: "Over there, under the sign of the Bull, the symbol of indomitable might and success, there lies an obscure little people, the Persians. To-day they are subject to the Medes, but the hour seems near when their glory shall shine with a light that grows ever greater." His voice sank to a scarce audible breath. Nebuchadnezzar's eyes snatched it from his lips, which stammered: "Since the Bull is in opposition to the Scorpion, the sign of Judæa, the glory of Babylon will be confined between those two influences. One will make its greatness, the other will bring its destruction." [84]

Nebuchadnezzar tottered. He ordered a horoscope to be brought, and it confirmed Nergalorosor's words in every point. His ears drummed. In the nocturnal quiet of the platform high up in the sky, he seemed to hear the sound of things sliding, slowly falling to pieces. That must be the ultimate secret of the gods. In spite of piety, in spite of offerings, in spite of sacrifices and prayers, the sovereignty which they gave was vain; glory and empires were vanity of vanities.

HOROSCOPE OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR.

Reconstructed from the monuments and the probable position of the stars about 1.20 p.m. on the 15th June, 624 B.C. (see n. 84). The signs of the Zodiac run counter-clockwise, from the East (right) to the South or top of the sky (top), West (left), and North or bottom of the sky (bottom), these corners being occupied by the Ram, Twins, Claws of the Scorpion (the Scales), and Sagittarius respectively. Inside, in the same order, are: the Dove (the symbol of Ishtar), the Sun (Shamash), Nergal, Mercury (Nabu), the Moon (Sin), Bel-Marduk, and Saturn (Ea or Adar).

Among celebrated horoscopes, those of Nero, Cathérine de Médicis, and Mary, Queen of Scots, have been especially studied by historians of astrology. The celestial globe of Coronelli (1683), now at Versailles, represented the horoscope of Louis XIV.

All would at last be levelled in one same ruin, in which there was no intelligence or will or desire or ambition. He fled wildly down the dark stairs.

He was on the first terrace, when he heard a deep murmuring noise. The dawn showed an uncertain light in the east. The people were waiting to acclaim their king. King—what was the use? He would have smiled, but a hymn burst out, bearing to him the joy of his people, its faith and its hopes:

"Belit has given thee strength and understanding, Shamash has given thee justice, the god Sin has set thee first. What more wouldest thou?
The god Ninurta has given thee the uplifted weapon; what more wouldest thou?
The goddess Ishtar has granted thee the battle and the fray; what more wouldest thou?
The gods Shamash and Adad are thy protectors; what more wouldest thou?" [85]

The Sacred Way stretched before him. On the walls, beginning to redden in the sun, the great lions stood as if ready to add their roaring to the acclamation of the new King.

What did the future matter? He must meet it face to face, and defy his destiny. To submit to that expectation of final annihilation would be to resign himself to mediocrity and decay. First he must take all that the present had to give, and it was there in its glorious reality, supplying the enthusiasm which has confidence. The people cheering him wanted glory; he would give them their bellyful in the service of his own, and there would be some left for the gods of Babylon, too.

The chariot bounded over the uneven flags; the human masses clustered against the walls; the clamour grew more and more deafening. It went to Nebuchadnezzar's head. What did it matter now, that the disk of Shamash, over there, was looking ironically from its thousands of years of age at this passing

human effervescence? Even if he himself were only to be a shooting-star, he, like that glorious ball of fire, was an emanation from the great lord Bel-Marduk, the supreme god of whom he had just now been proclaimed son. "A slave is the shadow of a man. A man is the shadow of a god. But a king is the likeness of a god." So ran the old Chaldæan proverb.[86]

Flaming in the sunrise, the double gate with the heavy cedar-wood doors stood open to the Royal City, which rang with a thousand plaudits. All the courtiers and denizens of the Palace were there, true to the tradition which Nabonidus afterwards engraved on stone:

> "Unto the midst of the Palace they brought me, and all of them cast themselves at my feet, and kissed my feet, and paid homage to my royalty. At the command of Marduk, my Lord, I was raised to the sovereignty of the land, while they exclaimed, 'Father of the land! He does not have an equal!' As for Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, the Kings who preceded me, I am their mighty delegate. Their troops have been entrusted into my hand. . . . I rejoice their heart!" [87]

NOTES ON CHAPTER TWO

[1] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. ii, p. 705. According to Maspero, the King, immediately on his accession, went to the temple to receive a solemn investiture, the form of which varied with the god. In Babylon, he went to the statue of Bel-Marduk in the first days of the month of Nisan following his accession and " took his hand " in sign of homage.

After that, he acted as Marduk's deputy on earth, and the meticulous devotions in which so much of his time was wasted were like a vassal's acts of allegiance to his overlord, or the daily interviews of the steward of a great lord with his master to submit his accounts and to discuss current affairs. Any omission of these observances which was not justified by *force majeure* might be interpreted as a lack of respect or a desire to rebel. The neglect of the smallest detail of this service immediately brought down the anger of the gods on the King himself and then on his subjects. So it was in the immediate interest of the people that he should perform his priestly functions properly, and piety was not the least prized of his virtues. The Cylinder of Cyrus shows in striking fashion the influence which this conception of the religious capacity of the King had on politics ; the priests and people regarded the triumph of Cyrus as the vengeance of the gods of Chaldæa, offended by Nabonidus.

The Chaldæan kings were not gods, like the Pharaohs ; they were content to hold a place intermediate between gods and men and to have powers for dealing with the gods which ordinary mortals did not possess.

If the King had tried to do everything himself, his whole life would have been spent at the altars. Even when he devolved as much as possible on the regular priesthood, what was left to him still took up a great deal of his time. Every month, every day, brought its unavoidable round of sacrifices, prayers, and processions.

[2] Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, pp. 78–80.

[3] Koldewey, *The Excavations at Babylon*, pp. 31 ff. This gate was discovered in 1902 by Koldewey and King. " The finest monument at Babylon is the Gate of Ishtar, reconstructed by Nebuchadnezzar II, near the citadel at the point where the

Sacred Way entered the old city. It was composed of two structures of baked brick, each corresponding to one of the town walls, and each of which was closed outside and inside by a door. A court separates them, itself enclosed by two small walls. On the two lateral sides the gate is flanked by a wing through which a passage had likewise been driven. There were therefore three distinct entries closed by eight gates" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 175). See also King, *History of Babylon*, pp. 52 ff.

[4] "The two central towers facing the entry on the north-west, the whole façade, the main passage, and the south-east façade facing the town, are decorated with animals arranged in tiers each representing a single species. . . . Six tiers are below what seems to have been an ancient causeway of the Sacred Way; eight below a causeway of baked brick; ten below the causeway of Nebuchadnezzar paved with stone. The animals in the first nine tiers are in relief, and composed of bricks not enamelled. Above, there are two tiers of animals in enamelled brick, not in relief, then two tiers where the bricks are enamelled and in relief.

"It has been calculated that 575 figures went to make up these thirteen groups of animals; 152 are still in position. They all, as far as possible, face persons entering the town" (Delaporte, *loc. cit.*).

[5] Dedicatory inscription found at the level of the topmost pavement between the two doorways (Koldewey, p. 45).

[6] Koldewey, p. 46. The lion was the beast of Ishtar. But the bull of Adad and the dragon of Marduk here have a religious significance.

[7] Koldewey, p. 46; King, *History of Babylon*, pp. 57 ff. The Sacred Way seems to have been reserved for foot-passengers and religious processions, for no wheel-marks are found. It ran along the east side of the precinct of Etemenanki (the ziggurat), then turned to the right and, passing Esagila (the Temple of Marduk) on its left, crossed the Euphrates by the bridge, after which it again turned south to Borsippa. In clearing the Sacred Way, Koldewey (p. 54) found the following inscription on a paving-stone, engraved by Nebuchadnezzar after making repairs in the road: "Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he who made Esagila and Ezida glorious, son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon. The streets of Babylon, the Procession Streets" (Sacred Ways) "of Nabu and Marduk my lords, which Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, the father who begat me, had made a road glistening with asphalt and burnt bricks: I, the wise suppliant who fears their lordship, placed above the bitumen and burnt bricks a mighty superstructure of shining dust, made them strong within with bitumen and burnt bricks as a high-lying

road. Nabu and Marduk, when you traverse these streets in joy, may benefits for me rest upon your lips, life for distant days and well-being for the body. . . . May I attain eternal age."

[8] Koldewey, p. 26. It was the discovery of the first enamelled bricks of the lions of the Sacred Way in 1887 that made Koldewey decide to excavate Babylon. There must have been 60 lions to a side—120 in all.

[9] Koldewey, p. 303.

[10] Strabo (xvi, 1) calls it the Tomb of Belus. So too Lenormant in his translation from Berosus, *Fragments de cosmogonie chaldéenne*.

[11] "The House with the Lofty Summit."

[12] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, pp. 83–6.

[13] Scheil and Dieulafoy, *Esagil, ou le temple de Bel-Mardouk*.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6.

[15] These pilasters were never used in civil architecture. "They were stepped in the Temple of Ninmar, semi-circular in the Esagil, elsewhere rectangular as in the Ezida of Borsippa" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 145).

[16] Scheil and Dieulafoy, *op. cit.*, p. 367. The total area was over 90 acres.

[17] Delaporte, pp. 149 ff.

[18] Kigal = double substructure; ziggurat = stepped tower; Etemenanki = Place of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth.

[19] Scheil and Dieulafoy, *op. cit.*, p. 367. The sanctuary was a practically square building, 259 by 282 feet.

[20] The chief accounts of Nebuchadnezzar's temples are in the inscriptions—East India House, Wadi Brissa, Borsippa, Philippe, Rich. See Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, pp. 200–19, or Langdon, *Building Inscriptions*, pt. i.

[21] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 150, 152.

[22] King, *History of Babylon*, pp. 62 ff.

[23] My description of the god is taken from the figure engraved on a bar of lapis-lazuli from the treasure of Esagila, discovered by Koldewey, reproduced on the same page (Koldewey, *Excavations*, p. 221).

[24] "In the temple in Babylon there is also another sanctuary below, where there is a great golden statue of Zeus, and the great table near it and the step and the throne are of gold. The Chaldæans say that these things are made of 800 talents of gold" (Hdt., i, 183).

[25] For the size of the statues, we naturally cannot trust the Book of Daniel, but we may perhaps place more faith in Herodotos, who visited Babylon in the time of Xerxes or soon after, and says that he saw there a statue of solid gold 12 cubits high, a little more than the height which I have given (i, 181).

[26] Pirot, *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, col. 839; text from Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, vol. ii, p. 80.

[27] Ménant, *Babylone*, p. 201; East India House Inscr.; Langdon, *Building Inscriptions*.

[28] The *harpe* was an ancient Sumerian weapon, the ancestor of the yataghan.

[29] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. i, p. 705. Maspero says that from time immemorial the investiture of Chaldæan kings had consisted in simply "taking the hand of the god". There was no coronation. This had been the practice since the first kings of Chaldæa, and the Assyrians had observed it at home in Nineveh and in Babylon when they conquered it, e.g., Sennacherib, Esarhaddon, Ashurbanipal. The texts simply say, "He held the hand of the god", never adding any further explanation.

The first act of Cyrus after entering Babylon was to go to Esagila and "take the hand of the god", for in the eyes of the Babylonians he did not become their king until he had performed this ceremony. It was necessary for Nebuchadnezzar to do so as quickly as possible, in view of the ambitions of his younger brother.

[30] Ménant, *Babylone*, pp. 201 ff.; East India House Inscr.; Langdon, *op. cit.*

[31] Hdt., i, 183.

[32] Ménant, *op. cit.*, pp. 209–19; Langdon, *op. cit.*

[33] Koldewey, p. 181.

[34] *Ibid.*, pp. 197–9. The Sacred Way led to a bridge, the seven piers of which have been brought to light by the excavations. This bridge was 134 yards long (the breadth of the Euphrates) and 69 feet wide. Herodotos (i, 186), Diodoros (ii, 1), and Ctesias speak of it. The bridge, the tunnel, and the Hanging Gardens were the only monuments with stone foundations. In the Eulla Cylinder, Nebuchadnezzar speaks of the work done by his father "to cross the Euphrates".

[35] King, *History*, pp. 77–8 (text and plans). This ziggurat is at present the best preserved in Babylon. Its ruins, which are still unexplored, rise 130 feet above the ground.

[36] Berosus, in Lenormant, *Fragments cosmogoniques*, p. 369. In any case, Rawlinson's excavations have shown that the seven stories had facings of the colours symbolizing the seven stars, viz. (starting from the bottom), black (Saturn), white (Venus), purple (Jupiter), blue (Mercury), scarlet (Mars), silver (Moon), and gold (Sun). This, starting from the top, is the order of the days of the week, the origin of which is explained in a celebrated passage in Dio Cassius (xxxvii, 19). It was also observed in the arrangement of the walls of Ecbatana (Hdt., i, 98).

[37] Ménant, *Babylone*, p. 189. According to Jewish tradition, Borsippa was the scene of the confusion of tongues. A passage in the Talmud changes Borsip to Bolsif, which it derives from *balal*, " confuse ", and *seph*, " tongue ". Benjamin of Tudela, who visited this monument in the twelfth century, says that at that time Borsippa was traditionally supposed to be the Tower of Babel, or Tower of Tongues.

[38] In his Borsippa Inscription (Ménant, p. 217), Nebuchadnezzar says : " The Temple of the Seven Lights of the Earth, the Ziggurat of Borsippa, had been built by an ancient king. He had covered forty measures of ground, but he had not erected its top ; the men had left it from the day of the flood, the course of which they had not directed. The rain and the storms had scattered the works of clay and the facings of its walls. The clay had fallen in with the earth and formed a heap of ruins. The great god Marduk excited my heart to rebuild it."

[39] Ménant, pp. 11 ff. ; George the Syncellus, 38 B.

[40] Langdon, *Inscriptions du Wadi-Brissa*, p. 21, col. vi.

[41] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

[42] Statue in the British Museum (*Dic. de la Bible*). Nabu is standing, wearing a tiara round which two horns are curved. His hands are joined as if he were listening to his father, Marduk, his beard falls to his chest, and he wears a long fringed robe falling to his feet.

He announced the truths of his father Marduk to men, " supreme intelligence " was attributed to him, and he was the god of trade and finance (Oppert, ii, p. 257). He was also the god of science and letters, the special god of the scribes, he who established " the writing of tablets ". Placed in charge of the planet Mercury and identified with it (as Marduk was with Jupiter), he was also the god " who watches over the regions of the sky and earth " ; he saw to it that the movements of the stars and other phenomena took place regularly, and was accordingly called " the Captain of the Universe ".

[43] Wadi Brissa Inscription, in Langdon, p. 21, col. vi, " To Nabu the Hero who prolongs the days of Babylon at Borsippa I built anew . . ." etc., to col. viii (p. 23).

[44] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 166 ; Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*, " Les Fêtes du Nouvel An à Babylone ".

[45] Thureau-Dangin, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

[46] Scheil, in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, xviii, pp. 30–1. This prayer for the King is a unique specimen of the kind. The text, which is unfortunately fragmentary, recalls Psalm lxxi.

[47] Ménant, *La Bibliothèque de Ninive*. The excavations of Layard and Botta in the palace of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh

brought to light all the tablets of the royal library, which consisted entirely of copies of works in the temple at Borsippa. "In Chaldæa there were libraries in all the temples in the large towns, and we have proof that the Greeks were able to consult them. It is known that Berosus obtained from the archives of the lower valley of the Euphrates the information on which he based his history." Ashurbanipal ordered everything in the archives of Borsippa to be copied, as his letters show. Sargon I, King of Agade, has the honour of having been the first to collect cosmological, theogonical, and historical documents at Borsippa.

[48] "The cuneiform script includes several hundred signs, and formed in itself a science only to be mastered slowly and with difficulty. . . . Schools existed where lessons were given in reading, and in tracing on clay the elements of the script's signs. That of Sippar was . . . the most famous" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 198).

It was on the palace-walls of Persepolis that the existence of cuneiform characters was first observed, in the sixteenth century. For two hundred years they were supposed to be merely decoration. Grotefend, a Hanoverian scholar, was the first to discover in these inscriptions the names of Ormuzd, Darius, and Xerxes. Burnouf, Lassen, and Rawlinson reconstructed the Persian alphabet. The Assyrian alphabet was mastered more rapidly. Hincks, Norris, Oppert, and Ménant worked at the decipherment of this script, which was used for writing down every language in those regions of Asia from the earliest times to the first centuries after Christ, when it was still used in Babylon.

[49] "The Chaldæans regarded the heavens as an infinitely thick mass, through which a great tunnel ran round, connecting with the visible sky by two gates, one in the east and one in the west. The Sun, on a chariot drawn by wild asses, appeared every morning by the eastern gate, rose southwards, and went down through the western gate into the tunnel, which brought him back to the eastern gate for the next day. The flaming disk seen from below by mortals was a wheel of the chariot" (Bigourdan, *L'Astronomie*, p. 40).

[50] Hymn to Ninurta transcribed and translated by Ebeling (*Quellen zur Kenntnis der babylonischen Religion*).

The Neo-Babylonian tablet 81–11–3, 111, first edited by T. G. Pinches (in *Journal of the Victoria Institute*, xxviii, 1896, pp. 8–9), has been regarded by Delitzsch (*Babel und Bibel*, p. 81) as proving that monotheism existed in Babylon, since the chief gods of the Pantheon are represented in it as mere manifestations of Marduk:

"Ninurta is Marduk of Strength.
Nergal is Marduk of Combat.
Zamama is Marduk of Battle.
Enlil is Marduk of Dominion and Counsel.
Nabu is Marduk of Fortune.
Sin is Marduk illuminating the night.
Shamash is Marduk of Justice.
Adad is Marduk of the Rain," etc.

Fathers Dhorme and Lagrange do not agree with this view.

[51] Bigourdan, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 ff. Eclipses of the sun and moon have always caused alarm among primitive peoples. The Chaldæans claimed that they had series of observations going back 470,000 years, but the excavations prove no observations with certainty before 2300. "We may now state", Bigourdan writes, "that during the period of the Sargonids (722–607) the astrologers tried to predict eclipses of the moon and sometimes succeeded, as is proved by such tablets as the following: 'To the King, my Lord, I wrote, "There will be an eclipse". Now it has been indeed. It is a sign of peace for the King, my Lord'" (Thompson, No. 274 F).

[52] Diod. Sic., ii, 30–1. The method employed was as follows. Each lunar eclipse belonged to a series which recurred at regular intervals. The number of eclipses in each series was 5 and 6 alternately. The interval between two eclipses was 6 lunar months, or 177 days on an average. Each series began sometimes with one and sometimes with two partial eclipses, in the middle there were almost always two total eclipses, and it ended sometimes with one and sometimes with two partial eclipses. The series were separated from one another by a long period in which there was no eclipse, always covering 17 lunations. This succession was not maintained in all ages, but it had happened or would happen in the following periods: from 755 to 482 B.C., from 198 B.C. to A.D. 154, from 388 to 711, from 957 to 1391, from 1607 to 1948, etc. This being so, once a series had started, an eclipse of the moon might be expected every six months, whenever the full moon was visible. If the full moon was below the horizon or hidden by clouds at the time, the eclipse could not be observed, but the astrologer was able to account for the fact, and had no reason to doubt that it had really taken place (Bigourdan, p. 34).

[53] He promoted priestly studies and systematized the Chaldæo-Assyrian religion. His successor Naram-Sin completed the work, in which lay the germs of all civilization. There are innumerable copies in the libraries of the Assyrian palaces, particularly at Nineveh, where Rawlinson and Smith found those which are now in the British Museum.

[54] *W.A.I.*, iii, 54.
[55] *W.A.*, 3.
[56] *W.A.I.*, iii, 51.
[57] "It can be understood that the resources of the libraries of the temples of Babylon supplied Berosus with documents" (Lenormant).
[58] Bigourdan, p. 24. It is now believed that it was the Chaldæans who taught astrology to the Egyptians. Shortly after the time of Alexander, these doctrines were introduced into Greece, thanks to the works of Berosus, who, after leaving Babylonia about 280 B.C., started a school of astrology on the island of Cos. Astrology was combated by Christianity, but was held in great honour in the sixteenth century, with Charles IX of France and Nostradamus. The column of the Halle au Blé, certainly the oldest astronomical monument in Paris, was erected for the purpose of examining the heavens.
[59] Hdt., ii, 109.
[60] See Lenormant, *La Divination et la science des présages chez les Chaldéens*, pp. 1–101.
[61] Bigourdan, *L'Astronomie*, on the development of ideas and methods, pp. 27 ff.
[62] Diod., ii, 29–31; Lenormant, *op. cit.*
[63] Lenormant, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 ff.
[64] "The most celebrated astronomers believed in astrology, and many owed their livelihood to it" (Bigourdan, *op. cit.*, p. 26). Kepler confesses it naïvely: "Philosophers, while boasting their wisdom, should not blame the daughter of astronomy with such bitterness; that daughter nourishes her mother. How small would be the number of scholars to devote themselves to astronomy, if men had not hoped to read future events in the heavens!"
[65] Lenormant, *op. cit.*, pp. 63 ff.
[66] *Ibid.*, p. 67.
[67] *Ibid.*, pp. 3–4.
[68] *Ibid.*, for the opinions of Philo Judæus and Diodoros, who writes (ii, 30): "As for the order and beauty which reign in the universe, they attribute them to a divine providence, and they assert that during the present age the phenomena of every kind which occur in the heavens do so, not by chance or spontaneously, but in virtue of a decision of the gods, taken beforehand and firmly laid down."
[69] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne de l'Orient*, vol. v, p. 229.
[70] *Ibid.*, p. 234.
[71] "Of course, the Babylonians only knew five planets" (Vigouroux, *Dic. de la Bible*).
[72] Berosus, in Lenormant, *Fragments cosmogoniques*.

[73] Bigourdan (*L'Astronomie*, p. 20) says, that the Chaldæans were unacquainted with the precession of the equinoxes. This, however, is not the opinion of Lenormant, who writes (*Fragments cosmogoniques*, p. 215): "It is very difficult to believe that the Chaldæans did not observe the gradual shifting of the equinoctial point on the ecliptic. . . . It is true that the discovery of the precession of the equinoxes is usually attributed to Hipparchos, but one is tempted to believe that in this he was merely the disciple of the Chaldæans. The true annual precession amounts to 50 seconds. Hipparchos reckoned it at 36. It is probable that the Chaldæans reckoned it at 30 seconds, and on this estimate calculated the whole cycle at 43,200 years. That cosmic day, therefore, the great chronological period of 12 *sars*, was simply the time required, according to their calculations, for the completion of the revolution at the end of which the equinoctial point, having shifted a few seconds every year on the circle of the ecliptic, returns to its first position."

[74] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. v, pp. 169 ff.

[75] Berosus, in Lenormant, *Fragments*, pp. 200–11; Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 232–3. The Chaldæo-Assyrian months were as follows: Nisannu or Nisan (March–April), the first month, Aiaru or Iyyar (Apr.–May), Simanu or Siwan (May–June), Du'uzu or Tammuz (June–July), Abu or Ab (July–Aug.), Ululu or Elul (Aug.–Sept.), Tashritum or Teshri (Sept.–Oct.), Arakhsamna or Marcheswan (Oct.–Nov.), Kislimu or Kislev (Nov.–Dec.), Tebitum or Tebet (Dec.–Jan.), Shebat (Jan.–Feb.), Addaru or Adar (Feb.–March).

[76] It is thanks to the labours of that great scholar, the Abbé Moreux, that we are able to assume that the spring equinox was at this time 35° ahead of the present equinox. It fell at the beginning of the Ram, whereas it is now in the Fish. So the Pole Star was a star of the Dragon. The Abbé Moreux took this fact and the precession of the equinoxes into account when, in spite of the distance of time and the imperfections of Chaldæan astronomy, he reconstructed the approximate position of the stars about 10 p.m. on the 15th June, 604 B.C., when Nebuchadnezzar became King.

On that valuable scientific foundation and in the light of Chaldæan science as it has been transmitted to us by Diodoros, Strabo, and Berosus, it has been possible to describe Nebuchadnezzar's anxious consultation of the stars.

[77] "The gnomon is the most ancient of the instruments used to follow the movements of the heavenly bodies. The 'sundial of Ahaz' in 720 B.C. was perhaps a gnomon, and Herodotos says (ii, 109) that the Babylonians introduced it to the Greeks"

(Bigourdan, p. 94). For the sundial of Ahaz, see 2 Kings, xx, 9–11.

[78] " The invention of the clepsydra was attributed to the mythical Hermes Trismegistos of the Egyptians. It is believed that the Babylonians made use of these water-clocks to divide the Zodiac into twelve equal parts. Water-clocks varied very much in shape and size. Ctesibios later became famous by manufacturing them, and some must have been quite small, since Cæsar always took one about with him " (*ibid.*).

[79] " Sir David Brewster, speaking of a plano-convex lens of rock-crystal discovered by Layard at Nimrud, says: 'The convex side is tolerably well polished, and, though uneven from the mode in which it has been ground, it gives a tolerably distinct focus, at the distance of 1½ inches from the plane side.' " This piece of crystal was " used as a lens, either for magnifying, or for concentrating the rays of the sun " (Proctor, *Saturn and his System*, p. 195).

In his admirable work, *La Science des Pharaons*, the Abbé Moreux relates that he found in a Carthaginian tomb a plano-convex achromatic lens of rock-crystal with which he was able to examine details, invisible to the naked eye, on a finely engraved cameo dating from the same period as the lens.

[80] Thompson, *The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum*, London, 1900. This work contains over 300 reports—those which the astrologers of the Court of Nineveh sent to Ashurbanipal (668–626), which were found in the excavations, with those sent to the King by the astrologers of Babylon, Borsippa, and Sippar. Here is a specimen: " Two or three times during these days we have looked for Mars (Nergal), but could not see it. If the King, my Lord, should say, 'Is it an omen that it is invisible?' it is not " (Thompson, No. 21).

[81] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, p. 185; British Museum tablet K 2894.

[82] " Plato heard from the Chaldæan magicians that God had set the sun in the midst of the seven (planets), and that he had suspended the six other zones (of the planets) from it . . . and had set the solar fire in the place of the heart " (Commentary on Plato, *Republic*, passage on the Muses, 148, v).

This was not the heliocentric system. The Chaldæans supposed that the Earth was in the centre, surrounded, in order of proximity, by the Moon, Venus, Mercury, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; the Sun was in the middle in the sense that there were three planets between it and the Earth and three beyond it.

[83] " The date at which the stars were divided into constel-

lations is very remote, and there is considerable uncertainty as to the approximate period and the people with whom this division had its origin. In all probability, however, it is due to the Chaldæans, who seem to have had it from the Akkadians, most of the names of the signs of the Zodiac and constellations being written in the non-Semitic dialect of ancient Babylon" (Hastings, *Dic. of the Bible*, *s.v.* "Astronomy").

[84] For the reconstruction and astrological interpretation of the horoscope drawn on p. 63, I have consulted the famous treatises of Julevno and Alan Leo. M. Charles Du Bus, of the Bibliothèque Nationale, who pursues this art as a recreation after his serious work in historical geography, has kindly given me some further information and has drawn the figure, from the Chaldæan monuments.

[85] Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 163.

[86] *Ibid.*, p. 169.

[87] Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, p. 72.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SWORD OF THE LORD

BABYLON slumbered. Over all its accumulation of palaces, temples, and humbler dwellings lay an impalpable dust, motionless in the blue transparent night, like a light web woven by past centuries over the future. Brooding silence reigned. The mysterious melody of soundless nights rose from the ancient plain of Akkad to the high walls of the Palace which dominated the city, where Nebuchadnezzar was awake in his small room.

Ashpenaz was late. He was to have brought, in all secrecy, Nergalorosor, the Chief Magician, the faithful interpreter of the divine will. Twenty times Nebuchadnezzar had risen and sat down again, impatiently worrying with his hand the rams' heads of his high stool. A dull anger boiled in his heart, for the oracles which the old magician had translated to him on the top of the ziggurat on the night of his accession had lied when they promised him victories and wealth. He had been king three years, and no opportunity had yet offered of giving the measure of his worth and his ambitions, as he had done at Carchemish. Yet for three years he had adorned Babylon for its nuptials with glory. He had reared walls above walls, each higher than the last, temples above temples,[1] each surpassing the last in opulence—and in Babylon, already filled to overflowing with gods and splendour, he was eating out his heart, aching for the wild expeditions and the conquests which lead a man to immortality.

In the doorway two phantom figures appeared.

Before they had time to halt in a deferential pose, Nebuchadnezzar had drawn Nergalorosor to him, while Ashpenaz softly closed the cedar-wood doors. The round window shed a soft, mysterious light in the little room.[2] The King leaned towards the old priest. "Is the time not come yet?" Although Nebuchadnezzar had made the power of Chaldæa felt four years before at Carchemish, Egypt, without venturing to cross the Wadi al-Arish, was intriguing against Babylon at Jersualem. At Egypt's instigation, the young King of Judah, Jehoiakim,[3] to whom Pharaoh Necho had given the throne after deposing King Jehoahaz in 609,[4] had dared to evade the payment of tribute imposed on him, and had broken into open rebellion in the face of the generals sent to remind him that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, was his master.[5] And Nebuchadnezzar added insinuatingly, "Will Bel-Marduk permit the triumph of the Jewish god, this Jehovah whose priests maintain that he is the one, universal god?"

Nergalorosor was disturbed by this smouldering ambition, which did not take count of the dangers which the throne might run if the King left it, to fight for long years abroad. He knew well that three years had not extinguished the internal intrigues and ambitions from which he had preserved the throne at the death of Nabopolassar. He spoke the language of temporization and caution, and, the better to convince the young King, he appealed to his vanity and pride. Why attach so much importance to these wretched little Jews? Jehoiakim was not an adversary worthy of the King of Babylon. For months already, the people of Babylon had been surprised to see their most brilliant leaders and their most formidable siege-engines held at bay by that people of peasants, whose very heroes had all followed the plough or shorn sheep. Gideon had been threshing the wheat when the angel appeared and bade him deliver his people from the yoke

of Midian. Saul, their great captain, had been guarding his father's she-asses when the judge of the people, Samuel, announced to him that he would be king. Even David, the most distinguished of their rulers, had learned the courage which brought him victory in war when he was a simple shepherd, protecting his flocks from the wild beasts. Great conquerors had always scorned these Jewish kings, who had no idea of prestige, but hobnobbed with their own people and allowed themselves to be led and insulted by demagogic prophets,[6] the *nabis*, who did not fear to set up their god against their king!

"Those mad prophets? They will be the most useful allies of the Babylonian armies!" retorted Nebuchadnezzar, and, again insinuating, he added, "In his temple at Jerusalem, has not Jehovah for ages past—since the time of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba especially—heaped up riches which ought to be in the treasury of Marduk?"

"Those riches are as much exaggerated as the very glory of Israel. What riches can be expected from a people which produces nothing? There was never an article of any kind of Jewish invention or manufacture! When King Solomon wanted to surround himself in luxury, he had to turn to the Phœnicians. They had to go to the Phœnicians even to build the single temple of Jehovah at Jerusalem, of which they are all so proud."[7]

"No doubt," said Nebuchadnezzar; "but behind this wretched, idle people there is its god, who claims to be the one sovereign lord, and boasts of making and unmaking nations to the increase of his glory. Against him, I shall be the sword of Bel-Marduk. I shall carry off his people into the shadow of my glory; I shall destroy his temple for the profit of my treasuries. So I shall teach the world the folly of the mystical ambition which claims to conquer the world by despising material riches, by ignoring the prerogatives of birth

and rank, by preaching through the mouth of its prophets a spiritual internationalism born of the levelling-down of nations, social classes, and souls."

This was a task worthy of the King of Babylon, and the laurels were so easy to gather! These Israelites did not know how to make war. Their prophets were always telling them of the vanity of human efforts. In their annals they wrote, without shame, "And all the men of Israel, when they saw Goliath, fled from him, and were sore afraid;" and when their leader Gideon, before attacking the Midianites, said, "Whosoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart," twenty-two thousand out of thirty-two thousand left him!

"Victory may be dangerous for the King," said Nergalorosor anxiously. "I fear that the Babylonian people may be contaminated by contact with a race whose subversive proselytism aims at sapping social institutions and denying the privileges of might and wealth in the name of some divine morality or other. Their great prophet Jeremiah has even codified that morality,[8] which requires the liberation of slaves—'If thy brother be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee'[9]—protects the hireling—'Thou shalt not oppress an hired servant that is poor and needy. In his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it (for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it); lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee'[10]—and encourages desertion—'What man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not eaten of it? And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? Let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle.'

"This fantastic code[11] even inculcates clemency towards the vanquished: 'When thou seest among the captives a beautiful woman, and thou hast a desire unto

her, and wouldest take her to thee to wife, then shalt thou bring her home to thine house. And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will; but thou shalt not sell her at all for money, thou shalt not deal with her as a slave, because thou hast used her as thy wife.' [12]

" The people mistrusts any power which indulges in pity or weakness, which shows consideration to the weaker or knows any justice other than that of a sovereign, implacable will." [13]

Nebuchadnezzar thought for a while. Why should the demagogic preaching of the Jehovah-worshippers, criminal as it might be for the people of Israel, be any danger to him? It declared that the power which he held from Bel-Marduk was agreeable to Jehovah. Through the voice of his magicians, Jehovah himself called him to obliterate the kinglet Jehoiakim and to consecrate his overlordship over the people of Israel. Those prophets were far-seeing men. Their political judgement, like their foreknowledge of events, had not been at fault when, after Carchemish, they had declared that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, would have Pharaoh at his mercy.[14] They now felt that the might of the Chaldæans was of right divine, and that all peoples must bow before it. His own pride had not desired so much as was to-day promised him by the voice of Jeremiah.[15] Jeremiah cursed and betrayed his king, Jehoiakim, but he extolled Nebuchadnezzar. He preached resignation to Israel; on the ruins of Jerusalem he hailed with joy the glory of Babylon. How could one not answer to his summons: " Arise, get you up unto a nation that is at ease, that dwelleth without care. And their camels shall be thy booty . . . and I will scatter my people unto all winds, and I will bring their calamity from every side of them, saith the Lord." [16] In the midst of their internal strife, the people of Israel would not even

hear, behind the thundering voice of Jeremiah, the tread of the master coming to crush them.

Suddenly Nebuchadnezzar was silent. His face became fixed, and his eyes gazed into vacancy.

"But Jehovah," murmured Nergalorosor. "Will Jehovah be destroyed when you have destroyed his temple? If he exists at all, he is everywhere. His own people, to whom he promises misery, exile, and death, hopes in him with the deep, ineffable hope

SIN RECEIVING TWO WORSHIPPERS.

Cylinder, from Maspero. Lenormant regards this as a representation of the scene described on p. 83.

which can wait and endure in the souls of men. In any case, why choose Jerusalem for attack?"

"Behind Jerusalem is Egypt, and Egypt will always try to make it a centre of intrigue on the Syrian border, a gate ever open to its ambition and vengefulness." [17] If Babylon once conquered Jerusalem, it would dominate Syria, threaten Tyre and then Egypt itself. He would lead his armies in person. He leaned over to Nergalorosor. "You see that I would rather leave my capital in your wise hands than trust my army to a *turtan* (Commander-in-Chief). [18] When King Shalma-

neser V was at war with Tyre, his *turtan* Sargon, after taking Samaria, raised the army in revolt and seized the throne."

Nergalorosor saw that it was idle to attempt to check a pride which was bent on going its own way. Might the gods bless the enterprise! And without a word he led the King off to the ziggurat of Borsippa, to consult the oracle.

A priest went before Nebuchadnezzar to the top of the ziggurat, and brought him into the sanctuary. Yesterday, in accordance with a usual rite, reproduced on innumerable cylinders, a woman had been taken there at nightfall, to the couch of the god.[19] In the gloom a gold table could be seen, standing in front of a large bed.[20] The fabled voice of the Chaldæan Sibyl called the young King to her, and promised the success of his projects.

The sun was rising over Jerusalem, lying grey under a troubled sky.[21] Perched on three arid, rocky hills of the mountains of Judæa, the city consisted of a medley of buildings of all kinds crammed within zig-zagging, battlemented walls.[22]

Masses of people swarmed about the many gates. Some, country-folk, riding on donkeys or running breathless, driven by fear, were going into the city. They came from the south, and were in flight from the Ammonites and Moabites, who were raiding in the pay of Chaldæa. Others were townspeople, leaving Jerusalem with faces of resignation or shame, and making for the west, for Egypt, where they hoped to place themselves and their possessions in safety before the siege began.[23]

At the south end of the city, the Valley of Cheesemongers had lost none of its mystery and its attractions. Its rank, rustling greenery wound between two wild, dusty hills, towards the pool of Siloah and the valley of the Kidron. The ground was fertilized both by

the dense tangle of vegetation and by the sewage of the town, which was poured there.[24] Here and there, in the shadow of clusters of olive-trees, stood a thick pole of mud, a phallic symbol set up to the glory of Ashtaroth, Astarte of the Phœnicians.[25]

Only yesterday, the altars of the goddess had risen freely and without shame in Israel. In the valleys which cut through the bare, hot plains of Galilee, faithful worshippers had enjoyed the shade and coolness of their waving groves, and the breeze had borne, amid the friendly rustle of the olive-trees, the sound of sighs and kisses, mingled with the cooing of turtle-doves.

To-day there was no sound in the valleys, and the turtle-doves were mute. If they called, they were answered by the clash of arms and a fierce voice crying anathema on the sins of Israel. The altars of Ashtaroth, with her worshippers, had taken refuge inside the walls of the city, in this unfrequented, malodorous valley.

Under the shade of the olives, from the first break of day, there had been a continual bustle of men and women. But it was not the cooing of the turtle-doves that now greeted their tender frolics. At the entrance to the valley, near the Potsherd Gate, shrill infantile screams rose to the skies together with plumes of smoke, marking the pyres on which new-born babies were being offered up to Baal in holocausts.[26]

A loud, furious voice suddenly rang out from the top of the valley, drowning the voice of love and the voice of death:[27] "Woe unto thee, Jerusalem! Thou wilt not be made clean! How long shall it be yet? I will discover thy skirts upon thy face, and thy shame shall appear. I have seen thine abominations, even thine adulteries, and thy neighings, the lewdness of thy whoredom, on the hills in the fields."[28]

The avenging voice drove the harlots, male and female, through the shadows. Only a party of pert

young wags chanted a Proverb of King Solomon as they went: "A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry; for that shall abide of his labour all the days of his life which God hath given him under the sun;" and, on the pyres of Baal, the screams of the babies answered their careless ribaldry in the dismal dawn.

Those with whom life dealt ill had likewise heard the voice of the great prophet. It called to them, whose love for Jehovah was rewarded by neither pleasures nor privileges, and they came running.

"From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon, King of Judah, even unto this day, these seven and twenty years, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you, rising up early and speaking; but ye have not hearkened. Thus saith the Lord God of Hosts!" [29]

Men and women of the poorer classes, all reduced to the same level of haggard squalor by the siege, squatted in terrified groups round Jeremiah, who was followed as by a shadow by his faithful disciple Baruch,[30] son of Neriah and grandson of Maaseiah.

"Because ye have not heard my words, behold, I will send and take all the tribes of the North, saith the Lord, and Nebuchadnezzar the King of Babylon, my servant, and will bring them against this land, and against the inhabitants thereof, and I will utterly destroy them, and will make them an astonishment, and an hissing, and perpetual desolations."

The smoke-spirals which rose from the holocausts rained soot on the mob, who tore their old rags in distress, and the relentless voice went on: "Thus saith the Lord unto me: Take the wine-cup of this fury at my hand, and cause all the nations, to whom I send thee, to drink it. And they shall drink, and reel to and fro, and be mad, because of the sword that I will send among them." [31]

The most profitable servant of Jehovah was he who

possesssed might. Might was without effect or permanence in itself. Wherever it was manifested, even against the people of God, Jehovah would use it for the profit of the divine truth.[32] Nebuchadnezzar alone had the power which could chastise the people of God, led astray by bad kings, and lead it back into the arms of the priests. Nebuchadnezzar should be the sword of Jehovah against the people of Jehovah, that people which was ready to desert his just, strict religion to worship deities more indulgent to wealth and human frailty.

In the narrow lanes of Jerusalem, people were living in the open, hungry, ragged, crowded together, fighting the dogs and crows for offal. The all-important thing was to be behind the walls of the city.

At the foot of a high brick wall the crowd was thicker. Behind that wall was the aristocratic and military quarter, with its palaces in the Egyptian style rising in an amphitheatre, bright and decent and orderly in contrast to the huts of planks, reeds, and beaten earth of the other quarters, sprawling below.[33] There the *sarim* of the royal circle kept the loveliest women of Israel in their scented harems. On the arrogant luxury which they displayed all over their sleek persons, in the shape of fine linen, rich mantles, and precious stones, the maledictions of the old prophet underneath the wall called down the vengeance of Jehovah, the foe of luxury and adornment: [34] "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with stretched-forth necks and wanton eyes, the Lord will smite with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will lay bare their secret parts. In that day the Lord will take away their bravery, and instead of sweet perfumes there shall be rottenness; and instead of a girdle a rope; and instead of well-set hair baldness; branding [35] instead of beauty."

At the foot of the hill, as from a deep ditch, the

avenging voice mounted the wall and was swelled by the murmurs of the mob. In that miserable district, the people were the stalwart allies of Jeremiah against the war which decimated them and the wealthy who oppressed them.

Indoors, by the little low tables on which they laid the usual dish of figs mixed in oil and flour,[36] the women of this quarter dreamed of the kingdom of God of whose glories the prophet had spoken. When that came, there would be built, on the ruins of their own city, destroyed by the sword of Babylon, a city of joy and peace, in which all would share things alike, in Jehovah's bosom.

Jerusalem had by now waked altogether from the nightmares of its uneasy morning sleep. Its painful anxiety was shown in a feverish agitation, and every alley rang with shrill cries. In the Bakers' Street, the weavers, potters, and smiths, who represented the only industries of Jerusalem,[37] were already at work in their open shops, that they might lose nothing of the rumours going about. Soldiers, carrying heavy loads of bricks on their shoulders, cleared a way for themselves with harsh shouts ; day and night they were busy repairing the walls.

On an esplanade, ninety-five feet long and thirty-five wide, on Mount Zion, the highest hill of Jerusalem, the Temple, the soul of the city, reared its Phœnician front, a very small affair for the ideals which it represented. It stood at the back of a bare, treeless court, which was enclosed on the three remaining sides by a wall composed of three courses of heavy squared blocks. The court was crowded with refugees, huddling together in the attitudes of tired beasts, and giving off a ghastly odour of poverty and decay. In the *liskas*, the galleries which ran along the walls, under the pent-roofs of cedar-wood which afforded the only shade in the place, groups of black-clad figures walked to and fro. [8] These were the prophets, who

had their schools there, beside Solomon's Palace. To and fro they went, with their round backs, their long noses, and their fiery eyes, and argued passionately.

The debate was particularly fierce in the gallery of the school of Jeremiah and Hanan, son of Igdaliah.[39] Habbakuk, Hanan, and Ezekiel, bare-footed and clad in brown sacks tied round their waists with leather belts, were discussing events passionately. King Jehoiakim, whom Pharaoh Necho set on the throne, had recently died, abandoned by Jehovah, because he would not hear the prophets whose infallible utterances had always guided great kings, like David and Solomon. Young Coniah, his son, who had succeeded him under the name of Jehoiachin, showed no greater inclination to bow to their will and to deliver up his people into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar.[40] Imagination egged on imagination, proclaiming the cause of the city of souls, of which Jehovah offered such glorious hopes, against the cause of the city of the King.

Suddenly the angry voice of their master Jeremiah was heard outside the galleries, and hundreds of other voices echoed it, some bright with hope, others heavy with rage. A tall bowed shadow appeared in the doorway. Since Jeremiah had taken up the prophetic life in 627, that figure had for twenty-nine years been seen thus against every horizon in Galilee. To-day a heavy ox-yoke lay on his shoulders, the symbol of the coming captivity. His exaltation was at its height.

"I have heard the voice as of a woman in travail, and the anguish of her that bringeth forth her first child, the voice of the daughter of Zion that bewaileth herself."

All was over with Jerusalem and her divine mission among the nations, if the King and his officers, the Queen-mother and the aristocracy, had their own way against Jeremiah and the people who followed him, flattered in its hopes and its desire for revenge.

Already, two generations of kings had refused to listen to him! The wrath of Jehovah was heaping up against Israel.

Yet it was not so long ago, barely twenty years, when he had been the confidential adviser of King Josiah, and had, in the teeth of the Queen-mother Hamutal, who detested the party of the prophets, won him over to his policy of "Woe to the peoples that delight in war!" Although paying tribute to Nabopolassar, Josiah [41] had united the whole land of Israel under his sway. But the only use which he had made of his power and his sword had been to obey the prophets and to keep the worship of Jehovah pure in all Israel. There were no more *bamoth* (high places) to Baal then, no more altars to Ashtaroth, no more temple-slaves in the Temple. It was all abolished. The kingdom of Judah was cleansed of all stains, and, lest some other king might be tempted to restore the idols and to give the military aristocracy its old prerogatives, a holy Torah (Law) [42] was concealed in the Temple, embodying the new code of life for kings and people, powerful and weak. Only one thing mattered: to ignore all obligations due to one's country, birth, or wealth. There was but one duty: to love Jehovah and to follow the commandments of his prophets. Standing by the side of Jeremiah, Josiah had solemnly read out to the assembled people the great precept of the new Law: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." [43]

And now the successors of Josiah were rebelling against that rule of religion, based on the superiority of the spirit over material power. Judah, heedless of the counsel of the prophets, wished to fight with might and not with the spirit, to deliver itself by the sword and not by the soul from the control of the great power of the day, imagining that it could brave the armies of Babylon with impunity.

At the gate of the Temple, a raggle-taggle of afflicted, unclean humanity appeared. A man separated himself from the rest, and asked to speak with Jeremiah. It was Jaazaniah, Jeremiah's son, the leader of a tribe of Rechabites, who were ascetics of Kenite origin, dedicated by vow to the patriarchal life. They came to beg leave to take refuge in the shade of the Temple.[44] Jeremiah welcomed them, and called down the blessings of Heaven on these faithful ones, who observed the commandments of Jehovah and would swell the number of his own supporters.

Over the walls, the threatening forms of the Babylonian siege-engines could already be seen. The prophet, intoxicated with his own words, called to them with outstretched arms: "Zion shall be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the House as the high places of the forest."[45]

The voice rose louder, more angrily; it lashed the Temple with its wrath. The High Priest Pashur, chief governor in the House of the Lord, appeared on the threshold, pale-faced against that uncontrolled mob. Jeremiah shook his fist at him, and his voice scourged the minister of Jehovah who betrayed his God to serve his King. The crowd became silent, and fell back in awe, leaving them alone, face to face—the man who strove to reconcile his divine mission with respect for the temporal power, and him who claimed to hold his mission from God alone, and, heedless of established privileges and institutions, would bend mighty and weak alike to his will.

Jeremiah felt that it was an unequal struggle, but he had on his side, not only the armies of Nebuchadnezzar, but the hungry mob of the unemployed, the fanatical, the poor in spirit. He accepted the conflict with all that it entailed. He met terror with terror. With lifted arm he threatened Pashur, the Royal Palace, and the aristocratic city of courtiers and courtesans be-

hind him: "They have digged a pit to take me, and hid snares for my feet. Yet, Lord, thou knowest all their counsel against me to slay me. Forgive not their iniquity; deal thou with them in the time of thine anger. Deliver up their children to the famine; and let their wives become widows; and let their men be slain by the pestilence. Let a cry be heard from their house, when thou shalt bring suddenly upon them the armed hosts of Nebuchadnezzar. And thou, Pashur, and all who dwell in thy house, ye shall go into captivity. Ye shall go to Babylon and there ye shall die!"[46]

The prophet gathered his rags about him, and with great strides his lean, angular figure bored through the crowd and trailed it after him to the Royal Palace.

The outer wall consisted of three rows of great hewn stones, with a row of cedar beams on the top.[47] In the faint haze which lay like a pearly grey veil on the air, the gaunt appearance of the place was softened down as if by distance. In the empty court stood the ancient palace of David and Solomon, an Egypto-Phœnician building made up of straight, plain surfaces, the crude colouring and lines of which were relieved only by the morning mist. In a room into which the daylight had not yet penetrated, Jehoiachin slept, the eighteen-year-old King, whose prospects of future glory seemed barred by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar. Only last night, he had gone by torchlight to the end of the sacred ravine, following his father's body on the way to the ancestral cave of Uzza, where it now lay with Manasseh, Amon, and Josiah.[48]

Under the porch of massive pillars at the end of the Court, an army of servants and slaves was going up and down the steps which led to the Porch of Judgement, the throne-room.[49] A council of the ministers was to be held there presently, and they were busily preparing the apartments of the Palace. In the semi-darkness, the throne of Solomon could be seen, shining with the

dull gleam of ivory overlaid with pale gold in the apse in which it stood, at the top of a flight of six steps, on which twelve great gold lions mounted guard.[50]

In the adjoining building,[51] there was a large rectangular hall, divided into parallel aisles by four rows of cedar-wood pillars. Two hundred large shields and three hundred smaller ones, the parade armour of the King's Guard, hung from the walls and reflected the melancholy light of the morning from their convex faces. Soldiers lay in heaps on the floor, sleeping a heavy, dreamless sleep. Their dull brains were free from the least anxiety about the fate of the arms in their keeping, which Nebuchadnezzar would tomorrow carry away from this " House of the Forest of Lebanon ", the armoury which Solomon had built.[52]

At the end of a second court lay the King's apartments, in all their trumpery splendour. The cedar-panelled walls were covered with festoons and gilding,[53] a pathetic reminder of the attempt of Solomon, five hundred years before, to adorn the bare house of his fathers for his bride, Pharaoh's daughter, hoping to surpass the magnificence of that Egyptian art which had cast its spell on him in his youth.[54] The Queen-mother Nehushta, the daughter of Elnathan, Achbor's son, the famous anti-clerical minister of King Jehoiakim, was already up, anxious about her son, about Jerusalem, about the day which was beginning with such a pale, uncertain dawn. She tried to forget the present in thoughts of a less unhappy past. For a moment her eyes lay on the long series of pleasant halls which had once housed the retinue of the Queen of Sheba and that of the fair Abishag the Shunamite, and were now given over to the virgins whom she had insisted on choosing herself for the harem of her son.[55] In imagination she saw them all, the young princesses from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and Tyre, whom she had addressed with gentle exhortation : [56] " Forget thine own people, and thy father's house ; so shall the

King greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy lord; and worship thou him."

How happy her son had seemed, when they had all been brought in to him in their embroidered dresses, followed by their maidens, whose dances and cries of delight were their only adornment! And with a mother's pride she had answered the look of perturbation in her son's eye: "They enter into the King's palace. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth." [57]

But at the door of the King's bedroom, the panels of which still bore the gold emblems of Solomon, she heard the steward of the royal household kicking the eunuchs who lay sleeping at the threshold, and waking Jehoiachin for the Great Council.

The round window cast a wan light over the bed on which the young King lay, and accentuated the expression of melancholy which clouded his youthful features. In the dreary report which he was hearing, as he did every morning, from his *mazkir* (chancellor),[58] offering him nothing but disappointments and anxieties, he would have been so glad to hear a word of hope, a word of life, a word of affection. He stood up while his servants busied themselves over his toilet, and dreamed of pleasant illusions. Over his long fringed tunic, the slaves placed the short-sleeved caftan, open in front. They put on his soft leather slippers.[59] His eunuchs curled his hair and beard and painted his eyes and cheeks.

The Chancellor spoke of the last Babylonian attack, of the famine which was decimating the city, of the delay of the Egyptians in bringing the promised aid. The King went on dreaming. Reality was so hard! Then the Chancellor, in his monotonous voice, described the scenes which had just taken place at the gate of the Temple, when once again Jeremiah had attacked Pashur, the demagogue prophet confronting the priest who respected authority, with the

sovereign people looking on. The King trembled. Here he was again, the fiendish prophet who had figured in the nightmares of his childhood, whose furious imprecations had darkened his youth, who was the cause, not only of his father's death, but of the present extremity of his kingdom.[60] He was not the prophet of God, but the agent of Nebuchadnezzar, a traitor, who wanted Jerusalem, the city of God, to be subject to Babylon—an Israelite preaching desertion at every street-corner! The King's youthful pride boiled at the thought.

But the Sar Saba, the chief of the Cherethites and Pelethites,[61] the foreign bodyguard, was waiting to conduct him to the throne-room, where the Queen-mother and his father's ministers, now his own, were assembled. At the threshold of his room, a voice came to greet him with the morning breeze. It came from the galleries of the Temple, chanting a psalm whose dreamy rhythm seemed, for all its restraint, gradually to invade the whole of space.

"The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance.
In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." [62]

Jehoiachin felt himself stirred by the sonorous magic, mournfully sounding the prayer of all the ages —a song of life and love. Then he thought of Jeremiah. He had always fled from the gaunt, ragged figure and the face on which perpetual vexation had engraved deep furrows. When he was quite small, in that same palace, terror had already hovered over him. This man personified it—Jeremiah. As far back as he could remember, it had been Jeremiah, always Jeremiah, who had haunted the lives of his parents and of his uncle, King Jehoahaz, before them, filling them with fear and remorse. Why should it be Jehovah speaking through the mouth of that damned prophet, whose only idea of serving him was to disperse his people and to humiliate their King?

Was it necessary to crush nations and princes, in order to bring about the reign of justice, which princes had the right to dispense? His poor father had never been able to admit such nonsense. Why should Nebuchadnezzar be the chosen of Jehovah, when he was every day treacherously causing Israel to be ravaged by the Moabites and Ammonites, even at a time when it was paying him tribute? His father had been right to revolt, to defend the throne of Judah—and it was on that day that Jeremiah had held forth to the people at the cross-roads and to the Levites in the Temple against any attempt to deliver the nation. Really it was Jeremiah himself who had lost faith in Jehovah, in his people, in the divine institution of the throne of Judah, since he preferred to see them subject to a foreigner! The Palace rang with the foul insults which the prophet yelled almost at its doors, mingling curses with ironical exhortations. Now that the enemy was at the gates and the people were suffering, the terrible voice exulted in their misfortunes and promised them others still more awful.

In the throne-room, the ministers were waiting —Elishama, the Royal Scribe; Delaiah, son of Shemaiah; Elnathan, son of Achbor; Gemariah, son of Shaphan; Zedekiah, son of Hananiah. They were talking gloomily at the foot of the throne.[63] Having already been ministers under Jehoahaz and Jehoiakim, they were quite alive to a situation which every day made more alarming. They could no longer count on the help promised by Pharaoh; the Chaldæan siege-engines were reared against their walls; behind them the immense army of Nebuchadnezzar was massing. The wind brought the harsh cries of the attackers and the regular blows of the rams, beating against the gates.

And outside, in the very heart of the town, those sounds were echoed by the voice of Jeremiah, raging ever louder, calling for surrender! Surely the worst

enemy of Jerusalem was the traitor who had been responsible for the death of Jehoiakim. He rejoiced in the misfortunes of the kingdom of Judah, because he hoped to advance his own interests, to establish his spiritual power, through its fall.

Would the young King have the courage of his father? Were it not for that maniac Jeremiah, resistance was possible, Elishama maintained. They must persuade the King to order his arrest.

Zedekiah, the leader of the military party, supported him. The prophet's ideal of peace with humiliation meant the end of the military aristocracy which had made the strength of Jerusalem and the glory of Solomon, and was the breastplate of Jehovah, Lord of Hosts. The prophets were traitors to their country; the social reforms of which they dreamed were chimeras such as brought empires to their ruin. You could not rule—even the feeble souls of the dispossessed—with dreams and hopes whose realization was always deferred. It was impious to preach pleasant delusions in the name of Jehovah. Who would buy the radiant hope of a marvellous universal Kingdom of Jehovah at the price of defeat and captivity?

"For all that," Delaiah gently insinuated, "we must not forget the past. The great Kings of Israel and Judah were never able to free themselves from the control of the prophets, whose predictions always came true, for the designs of Jehovah could be read by them alone."

"If that was so," replied Gemariah moodily, "the Royal Scribe Elishama has given us excellent reasons for it. The prophecies of the *nabis* are nothing but the exalted expression of the soul of the Jewish people, which is never contented with its lot. The people listens to the prophets, because they revive memories of the past, when there were no rich and poor, but only children of Jehovah. The people listens to the

prophets because they rail against the luxuries and decencies of life, against everything which has made the power and greatness of a state—aristocracy, privileged classes. When Assyria enforced her dominion by the sword, when violence became the mistress of the world, the prophets turned traitor to the kingship of Israel, and rejoiced, and persuaded the people that Jehovah had need of a merciless sword, held by a stronger hand than those of the Kings of Judah, enfeebled as they were by dissipation, to chastise the impious. So he would assert his universal nature, and establish the Kingdom of God over the empires, which would fall when they had served his purpose. It is not till then that Jehovah is going to reserve a favoured place for his people!"

In answer to their troubled debate, the dreadful voice came up, unwearied, and the five ministers rose. On the highest step before the Temple, Jeremiah could be seen, frightful to behold. From the upstretched arms the rags fluttered with his passion like great wings. "Thus saith the Lord!"[64] he howled. "If ye will not hearken to me, to walk in my law, which I have set before you, to hearken to the words of my servants the prophets, whom I sent unto you, but ye have not hearkened, then will I make this house like Shiloh, and will make this city a curse to all the nations of the earth."

Then the voice was silent, but the glaring eyes and the pale visage remained turned towards the Palace. To ward off the curse which they felt coming, the five ministers stretched out their arms in an instinctive, unanimous gesture of defence, and slowly stepped back towards the throne, at the end of the dim hall.[65]

If the King wished to carry on the struggle against Nebuchadnezzar, he must, like his predecessor, have Jeremiah imprisoned; but who of them would dare to arrest him if the King gave the order? In 605, King Jehoiakim had in his anger wanted to burn the

abominable pamphlet which Jeremiah had caused his disciple Baruch to read to the assembled people at the New Gate, which called the sword of the King of Babylon down upon Jerusalem.[66] The people had risen in mass to prevent the word of Jehovah being thrown in the fire and his prophet imprisoned. At that time it had been necessary to give in to the popular movement. Elnathan, Delaiah, and Gemariah themselves had had to make the King see the necessity of submitting and concealing his anger.

The four others turned frightened faces towards Elnathan. He had given proof of his mettle when the present King's father had ordered him to take possession of the prophet Urijah, who was almost as dangerous as Jeremiah in his hatred of the royal power and the military party. He had not been afraid to follow the insolent prophet into Egypt, track him down, capture him, and kill him in the King's presence in Jerusalem.[67] Perhaps he would show equal courage to-day.

While the sun rose steadily from the horizon, the ministers remained silent in the shade of the great cool hall, as if afraid of reawakening that dreadful voice. A shadow stood in the light of the doorway, and they trembled lest they should see the grisly figure of the prophet. No, it was a slight, anxious figure—Nehushta, the Queen-mother and Regent, whom the prophets called the enemy of Jehovah. With the gold diadem on her head, she advanced with small steps, the great folds of her dress swaying with her movement and the rings on her arms and ankles and at her ears chinking. Her garments of white, yellow, and blue shone with suns, crescents, fringes, and clasps of gold.

She was followed by Jehoiachin, faltering and insignificant. At the foot of the throne of Judah he hesitated for an instant; only last week his father had sat there. Urged forward by his mother, he quickly ascended the six steps, and sank down on the seat,

surrendering to his fate. His mother sat down by his side; below them the circle of ministers remained silent. The dull thudding of the battering-rams could be heard dimly through the lamentations of the frightened, hungry people.

Jehoiachin thought of all the suffering which had visited his kingdom since the days when Solomon had sat here in his glory, with the same twelve lions of solid gold and the bodyguard with their golden shields. Of that glory all that remained was a memory, tarnished by murder and intestine strife of which this very palace had been the theatre. Let alone glory, was he even sure of keeping the power which he had received so young, and which Jehovah himself seemed to dispute by the voice of Jeremiah? He turned a pale, anxious face towards his ministers, and saw only expressionless features and shut mouths.

At his insistent request, Elnathan in a low voice described the situation. "We can still fight, perhaps even conquer——" but his face belied his words. In speaking of hope, his voice, already low, failed altogether, afraid of itself and of the visions which his mind saw.

A clamour arose at the Palace gates. A ragged mob came and attached itself to the outer wall like a proliferating fungoid growth. From a hundred mouths distorted by hate, hunger, and religious frenzy, a furious screaming came up, as wild as the howling of a beast. Jeremiah stepped forth from the mass, and advanced slowly towards the Palace, with set eyes; and once more the silence was so deep that the distant noise of the Babylonian engines could be heard distinctly.

Jehoiachin's anxious queries now found an answer in the harsh voice of the prophet, insolently crying, "Humble yourselves, sit low! For your headtires are come down, even the crown of your glory!" [68]

The five ministers stretched out their hands towards

the door to avert the curse. All had risen, protecting their King. The traitor must be arrested. But Jeremiah, filled with the spirit of Jehovah, went on, where he stood in the doorway, raging and frightful, and between his arms, upraised in malediction, the sun shot his golden arrows, as if to pierce the heart of the King: "Jehoiachin, son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, thus saith the Lord: I will give thee into the hand of them that seek thy life, even into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, and into the hand of the Chaldæans. And I will cast thee, and thy mother that bare thee, into another country, where ye were not born; and there shall ye die!"

Crouching forward, with blazing eyes and clenched teeth, Jeremiah remained a moment, defying the King, who sat still on his throne, while the ministers all round him looked at each other in fear, the sweat running down their white faces. But Jeremiah slowly withdrew, and his voice was heard dying away in the distance: "O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord! Thus saith the Lord: Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days. Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture!" [69]

The Queen-mother, the ministers, and the guards, who had been called, stood exhausted and voiceless, as if they had fought a hard battle. They remained with crossed arms and hanging heads, breathing great draughts of the hot air. The young King stood up. He, too, was breathing loudly; the awful curses of the prophet still rang in his head, and he passed his hand across his brow, as if to wipe away thoughts which came pressing upon him. He felt utterly weary. In the midst of the nation, the House of Judah stood alone, with nothing behind it but the depleted military and patriotic party.[70] Reviled by the prophets for its nationalism and its opposition to their levelling, Utopian pietism, the Court had become a mere aristo-

cratic clique, without any ties with the enthusiasms of the people, who were entirely won over by the Levites. What was the use of struggling against Nebuchadnezzar any longer? He decided to surrender.

On foot, the King,[71] his eunuchs, his officers, his mother, and all his household trailed through the city. They made their way with difficulty over the rubbish and filth which blocked the streets, and at every cross-roads they were hooted by the soldiers hidden behind the barricades erected for the defence of the town. The North Gate opened before them, and over the plain, covered with dead and bristling with war-engines, they went forward to meet him whom Jeremiah called the Sword of the Lord.[72]

Night had fallen. The lights and tents of the Babylonian camp stretched over a great space. It was filled with tumult—trumpet-blasts, neighings, the clash of arms. In the darkness, Nebuchadnezzar was standing before a tent higher than the rest. Through an opening in the cloth of gold, Jehoiachin saw the gleam of swords, shields, and helmets in the darkness. All prostrated themselves and crawled along the ground.

In the soul of Nebuchadnezzar, pride made a sudden gulf in which everything vanished before one sole thought: the oracles had not lied; his empire would shine over the world more surely than the visionary kingdom of Jehovah.[73] How ridiculous to hope for every kind of riches and satisfaction from the promises of a god who betrayed you! Not an ideal, but might, composed of the effort of a dominant will, was the foundation of empires.

NOTES ON CHAPTER THREE

[1] The topographical tablet of Babylon in Berlin, mentioned by Pallis (*Babylonian Akitu Festival*, p. 80), mentions forty-three temples. From the inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Kings we know of fifteen. Three have been excavated and explored (Esagila, Emakh, and Epatutila) and two have been excavated but not identified (Temple Z and that of Ishtar in Merkes). See Delaporte, *Mesopotamia.*

[2] For the palace, see ch. iv below.

[3] Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, vol. iii, p. 265. Jehoiakim means " He whom Jehovah hath reared up " ; he was the son of King Josiah and Queen Zebudah.

[4] " He whom Jehovah hath adopted ", a son of the pious Josiah and Queen Hamutal.

[5] " Jehoiakim had been unpopular in Jerusalem. So much was he regarded as the creature of Necho, that it was said that he owed both his throne and his royal name to the Egyptian conqueror " (Renan, *loc. cit.*). Cf. 2 Kings, xxiii, 34.

[6] Renan, *op. cit.*, vols. ii–iii.

[7] Montet, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, p. 113 ; Lebon, *Les Premierès Civilisations.*

[8] Expositors are not all agreed as to the date of Deuteronomy, then called the Torah.

[9] Deut., xv, 12.

[10] Deut., xxiv, 14.

[11] Afterwards called Deuteronomy, by which name it is still known.

[12] Deut., xxi, 11–13.

[13] Renan, *Histoire*, vol. iii : " We believe that the earliest champions of the oppressed were the prophets of Israel, and that is why we accord them such an eminent position in the history of civilization." In them Renan greets " the first appearance of socialism ".

[14] Jer., xlvi, 20–6.

[15] Renan, *Histoire*, vol. iii, chh. xix–xxi. " From that moment, Jeremiah, the sombre giant of Jerusalem, had found his man. In his eyes, Nebuchadnezzar was a ' servant of the Lord ', a minister of God, executing his decrees (see Jer., xxv, 9 ; xxvii,

6). The theory of the Scourge of God, dear to the Fathers of the Church, begins. God strikes the peoples with terrible instruments, which he breaks after he has used them. He chastises by means of men whom he chastises in their turn. This philosophy of history, which is that of Bossuet and modern Catholicism, certainly owes its origin to Jeremiah" (*ibid.*, p. 283).

[16] Jeremiah; Renan, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

[17] See above, ch. i.

[18] Lenormant, *Manuel d'histoire ancienne*, 3rd ed., vol. ii, p. 132.

[19] Berosus, in Lenormant, *Fragments cosmogoniques*, states that there was an oracle in the top chapel of the tower of Borsippa, for the door of the chapel was called Bab-Assaput, "the Door of the Oracle". The responses of this oracle were given by a female hierodule, who spent the night in the chapel and was supposed to share the couch of the god, and she issued them as having been received from the god during her sleep. The belief in prophetesses was universal at the time. Moses condemned them.

[20] Bouché-Leclercq, vol. ii, p. 133, *La Sibylle chaldéenne*. This is the first appearance of the Sibylline type. The receptive nature of women predisposed them to being the most obedient instruments of the divine spirit. One never hears of more than one Sibyl in any continent or country. "In the minutely regulated cults of Egypt and Chaldæa one finds male seers attached as such to a given temple, but nothing which suggests the wandering destiny of the Sibyl."

In the time of Heracleitos, in 500, the traditions regarding the Sibyl were already held to be very ancient, and philosophy taught that her harsh and threatening voice had traversed a thousand years before coming to its own ears. She was then given the name of Sabbe. She obtained her credit from the extraordinary vogue enjoyed by Chaldæan astrology. She got her name of Sabbe from the Bible, and she was said to be a Hebrew.

St. Justin identifies the Sibyl of Cumæ with the Sibyl of Babylon, supposing that she was the daughter of Berosus and that somehow or other she came to Campania, where she gave her oracles at Cumæ, six miles from Baiæ. Several authors, including Plato in the *Phædros*, speak of this Sibyl as a prophetess.

[21] Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, p. 219; Renan, *Histoire*, vol. iii, pp. 299 ff.

[22] Their height is not certain. The figures of Josephus cannot be taken seriously.

[23] Jer., xxiv, 8.

[24] Renan, vol. iii, pp. 183 ff.

[25] Since the reign of Manasseh, religious eclecticism had been the constant practice in Jerusalem and the cities of Judah (Renan, p. 183).

[26] See all the earlier part of Jeremiah (the prophecies against Judah from the 13th year of Josiah to the 4th of Jehoiakim), especially iii, 23, 25.

[27] "As soon as the Jewish people found itself plunged into the midst of Asiatic civilization, old, refined, and corrupting, it became vicious while still remaining ignorant. It lost the virtues of the desert, without acquiring the intellectual development which is the heritage of time. The picture of Jewish society may be drawn in a few words—a patriarchal organization with the manners, the tastes, the vices, and the superstitions of the Asiatic cities, which had grown too old" (Lebon, *Les Premières Civilisations*, p. 659).

[28] Jer., xiii.

[29] Renan, vol. iii, p. 284.

[30] See Ménant, *Babylone*, p. 230. After the fall of Jerusalem, he settled with Jeremiah at Mizpah, and he followed him to Egypt after the murder of Gedaliah. After Jeremiah's death, he went to Babylon, where he wrote his works about 583.

[31] Jer., xxv, 15–16.

[32] Renan, *Histoire*, vol. iii. See pp. 283 ff. for the theory of the Scourge of God.

[33] *Ibid.*, p. 266. Pharaoh Necho's domination over Syria lasted three years. Jehoaikim was perfectly submissive to him the whole time, and the nobility of Jerusalem only thought of obtaining the beautiful articles of luxury which came from Egypt. These worldly tendencies naturally filled the school of the prophets with black rage. Egypt became more and more the object of their hatred and curses.

[34] Isaiah, iii, 16, 24; iv, 4.

[35] The enemy used to brand the faces of young captive women with a hot iron.

[36] Montet, *Histoire*, p. 112 (Payot, Paris, 1926).

[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 112 ff.

[38] Renan, vol. ii, pp. 143 ff., notes.

[39] *Ibid.*, vol. iii, p. 300. This school was near the Gallery of the Sarim, above that of Maaseiah, the son of Shallum, the Keeper of the Door.

[40] *Ibid.* On this subject, Renan writes: "We know too little of the political history of the time to be able to guess what could or should have been done by these unfortunate princes, who had the melancholy destiny of governing a people which was in its death-throes." Elsewhere he says: "These last princes of Judah do not seem to have been devoid of merit.

They tried to fight with courage against the national disorganization" (p. 270).

[41] The reform of Josiah which followed the discovery of the Torah (Deuteronomy) in the archives of the Temple has been interpreted variously by expositors. Some regard it as a mere legend. Others assert that the idea of centralizing the cult can only have been conceived during the Exile. Others, again, say that Deuteronomy may well have been composed in the reign of Manasseh, when paganism had spread widely in the Kingdom of Judah. I have followed Renan's view, which is adopted by many modern critics. According to this view, the text of Deuteronomy was composed a very short time before 622; the King was well-disposed, and the programme was drawn up and put into execution. Have we, then, to do with a pious fraud? Renan admits it; Deuteronomy and the reform were the result of a compromise between the ideas of the great prophets and the spirit of the priests of Jerusalem. Both parties gained by it. Renan says that the text must have been drafted by Jeremiah. In any case, the writings of the prophet prove that he brought all his energy and faith to the service of the reform.

[42] See Renan, vol. iii, pp. 226 ff.

[43] Deut., vi, 5.

[44] Renan, vol. iii, p. 306.

[45] Jer., xxvi, 18.

[46] Jer., xviii, 21–3.

[47] Renan, vol. ii, p. 127, and all ch. xi, "Constructions à Jérusalem".

[48] Renan, vol. iii, p. 300; 2 Kings, xxiv, 6.

[49] Renan, vol. ii, p. 132; 1 Kings, vii, 6–7.

[50] Some idea of Solomon's palace may be obtained from certain palaces at Luxor and Karnak, and especially that at Medinet-Habu.

[51] The reader should imagine a rectangular court like the great building at Hebron, with colossal masonry, only one door, and hardly any windows.

[52] 1 Kings, x, 16–21.

[53] Renan, p. 132; 1 Kings, vii, 7.

[54] Nothing in modern art could give a notion of these strange constructions, in which the heaviest of masses were combined with the lightest of accessories.

[55] Solomon's harem was enormous (Renan, vol. ii, p. 125). There were seven hundred official wives, called Saroth (Ladies), and three hundred concubines, who were slaves or servants of the Saroth. The most moderate estimates gave sixty queens, eighty concubines, and innumerable slave-women.

"Nehushta believed in the necessity of restraining the in-

temperate conduct of the prophets. The young King soon had a fairly large harem. Jeremiah pursued the unfortunate youth and his mother with a hatred equal to that which he had had for his father Jehoiakim" (Renan, vol. iii, p. 302).

[56] 2 Kings, xxiv, 15; Jer., xiii, 18; xxvi, 22; xxxvi, 12, 15.

[57] Psalm xlv.

[58] The *mazkir* was the chief chancellor, archivist, historiographer, and chief of the *nissabim* or prefects who collected the revenue in the kingdom.

[59] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, p. 127.

[60] Renan, vol. iii, pp. 290 ff.

[61] *Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 30.

[62] Psalm xvi, 5, 11.

[63] Renan, vol. iii, p. 291.

[64] Jer., xxvi, 4–6.

[65] "In his exaggerated language, Jeremiah could not measure words. He acted like a French publicist who should, in 1870, with the best of intentions, have called the Prussians the ministers of God, applauded our defeats as the result of our faults, and foretold a future ten times worse if we did not improve. The ferocious joy affected by the prophet is only an appearance, a figure of rhetoric. But what a challenge appearances were to public opinion!" (Renan, vol. iii, p. 289).

[66] Renan, p. 296.

[67] Jer., xxvi, 20–4.

[68] Jer., xiii, 18.

[69] Jer., xxii, 29–30. "Jeremiah here shows himself the most radical destroyer with whom any monarchy has been faced. He is also one of the most powerful creators of a religious order. The political city and the city of souls have opposite interests" (Renan).

[70] Renan, vol. iii, p. 270.

[71] After his deposition, the unfortunate King, in spite of his youth, was dragged into captivity and was not released until thirty-six years later. Nebuchadnezzar's son and successor made friends with him, and caused him to live with him in his palace in Babylon.

[72] 2 Kings, xxiv, 10 ff.; Ezek., xvii, 11 ff. Jehoiachin only reigned three months in all.

[73] Nebuchadnezzar's plan was not to destroy the city or to massacre the population, according to Renan (vol. iii, pp. 308 ff.). He applied to Jerusalem the method of transportation which Shalmaneser had applied to Samaria. The King, the Court, the officers, the ministers, the officials, and all capable of bearing arms were taken to Babylon. That made a total of 3,023 persons, or one-sixth of the population of Jerusalem, but these were

the civil and military aristocracy. The conquerors imagined that by thus removing the official leaders of the nation they were destroying its power of resistance. In the long list of classes of men who were transported, the Book of Kings makes no mention of priests, Levites, or prophets, with the exception of Ezekiel.

From 2 Kings, xxiv, 13, we learn that everything of value was taken by the victor—the treasures of the King's Palace and the treasures of the Temple, except the pillars of brass and the great brazen "sea".

The services of religion were not interrupted one single day. So the blow dealt to Jerusalem was not so serious as might be supposed. There is not even any trace of it in Jeremiah.

In the place of Jehoiachin, Nebuchadnezzar placed on the throne the deposed King's uncle, Mattaniah, a son of Josiah and Hamutal, aged thirty-one. His royal name was Zidkiyahu, i.e. Zedekiah.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE EMBASSY OF ZEDEKIAH

Babylon was asleep. In the triple shadow of the night, the walls, and the high ziggurat dominating all, the capital lay crammed within its ramparts as in a broad, heavy belt, on which the many gates were like colossal buckles. Over the dark, chaotic mass of the city stood another mass, denser and more mysterious, topping the walls with other walls, yet thicker,[1] and the battlemented towers with other towers, yet mightier—the Royal Palace, a closed world within the closed city.[2]

Gradually the dawn wore out the sombre fabric of the night, and revealed the light forms of trees and bushes, waving above the brick masses. By the side of the Palace, the pile of the Citadel could be seen, its crenellated walls and solid towers containing a huge quadrilateral between the Sacred Way and the Euphrates, a stronghold as forbidding as the city itself.

In the Palace,[3] Ashpenaz was up and about, thinking of the coming day. He feared that the audience requested of Nebuchadnezzar by King Zedekiah would have serious effects on the future of Babylon. The King of Judah was coming in person for the first time to bring the tribute of Israel to his overlord Nebuchadnezzar, and it must be because he had some secret purpose in mind.

Zedekiah owed everything to the King of Babylon, both his life and his throne;[4] but gratitude was a heavy burden for a king. It limited his sovereignty, namely, the power of compelling his unfortunate

people to pay for the privilege of being ruled by him. Ashpenaz had already heard stories of Zedekiah's projects of revenge, and had warned his sovereign. He had always protested against the benevolence which had been shown to Jerusalem. It was not enough to have destroyed the military power of Israel by deporting the aristocracy to Babylon; it was not enough to have taken all the treasures of the temples and palaces and to have laid the country waste. For the Chaldæans, perhaps, that material ruin might have been the complete ruin which breaks up a nation, depriving it of its foundations; prosperity was the complete justification of their nationalism. But the Israelites, through defeat, misery, exile, still believed in their supremacy, and no human might could destroy that belief, for they held it from God, the one God, Jehovah. Their nationalism, which was really a spiritual imperialism, was not the creation of an aristocracy more concerned for its own glory and interests than for those of Jehovah; it resided in the people, and above all in the host of priests, Levites, and *anawim*. Nebuchadnezzar should have killed or deported the whole Jewish nation, after razing arrogant Jerusalem to the ground. But now the place was a hotbed of national feeling, all the more violent because it was building up on the top of material ruins dreams of religious hegemony, of spiritual triumph. Materialism seemed to have idealism at its mercy, but could do nothing against it unless it carried its cruel logic through to the end and utterly wiped out all the souls which kept its opponent alive. Merely to deprive that idealism of its worldly possessions was to strengthen it and to give it life; it would gain a new impulse by discarding all the opportunisms and compromises with which wealth and prosperity had contaminated it.

His personal attendance on the King by day and by night had not prevented Ashpenaz from going about the town, gathering information. His suspicions had

only been confirmed by the conversations which he had overheard among the Jewish exiles, who, though living as loyal subjects of their new master, kept in touch with their former country.

By the old gate of the Palace, the Bab Belit, or Lady Gate,[5] which was guarded by a few soldiers, Ashpenaz saw a gaily-coloured throng entering. The passage from this gate opened on to a wide, sandy space surrounded by low white houses. Further off, the walls of the Palace, some topped by terraces, some covered by lustrous bricks, shone in the sunlight. It was already stiflingly hot; our thermometers would have marked 70° C. in the sun and 49° C. in the shade.[6] After the cold dawn, the sun had risen high in the sky, and would clasp the city in its burning rays till evening.

In the shadow of the red wall, Ashpenaz saw a number of figures, looking tiny under the terrific pile of bricks and asphalt, gathered round Sarsechim.[7] The short, stout form of the Chief of the King's Eunuchs was made still bulkier by a long tunic with short sleeves, falling to his ankles in voluminous folds. The magnificence of the wearer was attested by the dazzling embroidery of festoons and flowers which adorned this tunic and by its thick fringe of balls and tassels.[8] Over it he wore a light shawl, crossing over the back and chest and ending at the knees in a broad fringe set with sparkling beads; its delicate rainbow colours played kaleidoscopically with the swaying of its many folds. He had taken particular care over his coiffure; his hair was beautifully smooth over the top of his head and was gathered behind his neck, thence falling over his shoulders in long crimped tresses.[9] As he gave his orders in a piercing voice, innumerable bangles, circular and spiral, with lion's-snout clasps, jingled on his arms, which were laden with them from wrist to shoulder.

The eunuchs of the Palace,[10] numbering over a hundred, dressed tastefully but less magnificently,

PROTECTING GENIE AND EUNUCH

Relief in the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin

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stood all round with their soft, puffy faces turned to their chief, rolling their big eyes this way and that with apprehensive watchfulness. One of them, named Melzar, conveyed Sarsechim's orders to the rest, going from one to another and speaking to them in a low voice, as mysterious as the mystery of their secret life. In silence they dispersed, and vanished, like obsequious phantoms, down dark corridors, over terraces flooded with light, along winding galleries, and into the little chambers of the Palace.

Those dubious figures brought an atmosphere of gloom and fear with them everywhere. They swarmed in Babylon. The recent campaign against Jerusalem had provided the harems and palaces of the capital with over a thousand. Their mutilation could be read in their pale, sly faces, all alike in spite of differences of race. Their fat bare feet glided silently over the bricks, and their eyes could be felt where they lurked in the shadows, spying in order to report to their master at night.[11] Being cut off for ever from all possibility of personal power and activity, they were, in virtue of their very disability, the devoted servants to whom the chief employments of the Court were entrusted.[12]

Round the Captain of the Palace,[13] soldiers had gathered to receive their orders, and a swarm of servants of both sexes pressed round the Mayor of the Palace, who was making arrangements for the afternoon's function. The workmen of the Royal Factory,[14] which occupied the two main blocks of building, came to their work. They slipped through the extraordinary assortment of types and costumes which had come crowding to the audience on account of the special interest lent to it by the visit of Zedekiah. Their plain tunics of crude wool, ending above the knees, contrasted sharply with the dazzling variety of ceremonial costumes, some of which, worn by important officials, were a mass of beads from top to

bottom. Scribes [15] made a way for themselves, with lordly, patronizing airs, elbowing the loungers ruthlessly.

In contrast to the general excitement and flutter, a small group crossed the court with a slow, stately gait, not mixing with common men. Over their long tunics they wore immense shawls of startling red and blue, and their hair fell in crowded curls over their dark, expressionless faces. Ashpenaz went to the threshold of the second gate to welcome the chief officials of the kingdom in his master's name.[16]

Nebuchadnezzar had followed the tradition of the Assyrian Empire. To run the central administration of the kingdom,[17] to govern distant and dissimilar provinces, to conduct diplomatic relations with vassal princes and neighbouring kings, more was needed than a purely national organization. Already there were too many different races under the sway of Babylon for a single executive.[18] Three separate chancelleries, each with its own official language and its special customs, controlled the three great racial divisions of Babylonia—Chaldæa, the Aramæan countries, and Elam with the countries of the South.[19]

Most of the officials were swallowed up by the great building on the south of the court, which contained the Chaldæan Chancellery. This dealt with foreign affairs, the treaties and negotiations by which Babylonian interests were maintained in relation to neighbouring kingdoms. On the left, the Chancellery of the Elamite peoples attracted only a few. Opposite, was the red front of the Aramæan Chancellery, and what was left of the officials vanished into its doorway. Ashpenaz, standing on the threshold, followed them with a gaze in which confidence and hope were mingled. In his eyes, the future of the kingdom depended on that Chancellery, which had the duty of administering the inheritance of Nineveh—the vassal kingdoms of the West, Phœnicia, Israel, Arabia, which

would not go on paying tribute for ever, and were contemplating revolt from the control of Babylon. Babylon ought to destroy them and annex them to the Empire without more ado ; might by itself gave the right to conquer them, and it would be easy to find political and economic justification if necessary.

Ashpenaz was awakened from his thoughts. A man was entering the court at a rapid pace. His soft leather slippers gave him an elegant appearance, and his long white caftan and pointed cap revealed his Israelitish origin. Everybody in the court bowed down before him, making a flower-bed of coloured robes and bare feet on the black asphalt. A name was on every lip—Shaphan, whom Nebuchadnezzar had set up in Jerusalem as chief of the Chaldæan party, and who there displayed every kind of subtlety in the service of the King's ambitions, disguising brute force under a mask of justice.

There was now a continual coming and going at the door of the Chancellery. The *kipus*, or native residents, came to explain with their own mouths the written reports which they sent regularly to Babylon. There were Syrians, Arabs, Israelites, Egyptians, all charged with the duty of spying on their fellow-countrymen for the foreign master, expediting the payment of their tribute, and raising the military contingents prescribed in the treaties.[20] Inside the Chaldæan Chancellery, they met the great Babylonian governors of the South and the Sea Country who, on the pretext of making their reports in person, had come to see the ceremonies which were being prepared for the reception of the King of Judah.

While they satisfied their curiosity by plying the staff of the Chancellery with questions, old Nergalo-rosor, as chief governor of the country, sat in his office, while the more interesting portions of the mail were read to him. Bel-zikir-esir, who had a command on the frontier of Arabia, wrote : [21]

"To the King of the Earth, my Lord, your servant prays that the gods Bel and Marduk may grant many days, eternal years, a sceptre of justice, and an enduring throne. Concerning the order which the King, my Lord, gave me, saying, 'Of all that you learn of the Arabs, send me an account': Aikamaru, son of Ammihatah, the Vasite, went against the Nabatæans and slew and plundered them. One of them they spared. He entered the King's city. I now send him to the King, my Lord, and the King will hear the report from his own lips." [22]

Nergalorosor decided that after the reception of Zedekiah the man should be received in audience by the King.

In the great hall, the scribes unceasingly untied the big bundles of tablets which came in daily from every quarter of the horizon. From the nearest provinces and the furthest, from the hills and from the plains, on donkeys, mules, and camels, emissaries arrived in Babylon with political correspondence.

Curious groups gathered and dispersed in the great court at the caprice of their curiosity, as lightly as clouds of smoke. Three good-looking young Jews went quickly by, escorted by an elderly scribe who never left them. Like Ashurbanipal and Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar had brought these sons of a noble family at Jerusalem to be educated at the school of the Palace in Babylon, where they would receive the same instruction as the sons of the great native officers.[23]

With guttural cries of warning, slaves watered the ground from goatskins and sheepskins. The heat was so intense that the coat of asphalt laid on the bricks to retain the moisture gave off a steaming, tremulous haze. Day and night, these slaves worked in continuous shifts; for only one week in the year they were relieved of their duty by torrential rains.

Ashpenaz went past the Aramæan Chancellery. At

the end of the court, he came to the monumental gate, on whose walls the majestic lions of blue and yellow enamel eternally mounted guard.[24] In the shade of a colossal archway, the crowd was thicker and more mixed than ever—peasants in short tunics of coarse, crudely coloured material; elegant noblemen swathed in long, gaudy shawls covered with embroidery; women of the people in long smocks, red or blue and rather dirty, leaving one shoulder bare. These were litigants, witnesses, or advocates of the court of Nebuchadnezzar, who had supreme powers of jurisdiction over the whole of Babylonia. Since the time of Hammurabi, it had been the custom to deal with the chief legal and political cases in the King's Palace.

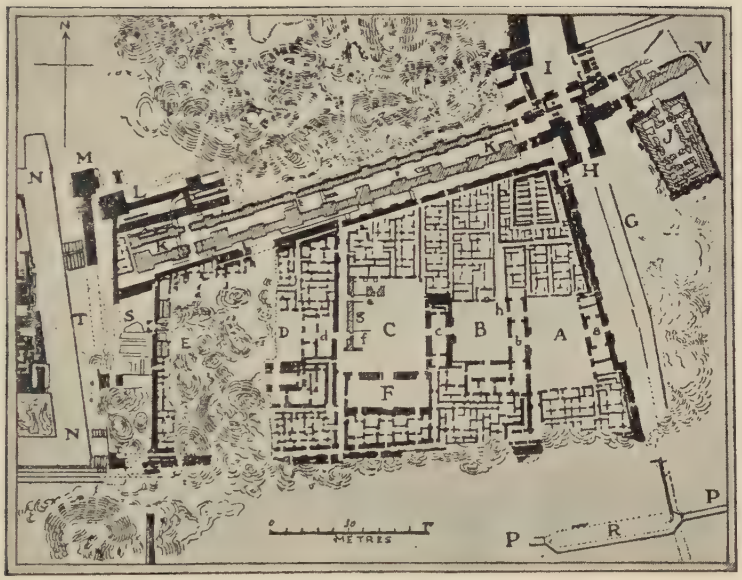
The light of the dog-days blinded Ashpenaz as he entered the third court.[25] The whole left wing was occupied by a large building with a monumental copper dome.[26] The flat façade was adorned with enamelled brick representing tall yellow columns against a blue background, under a broad band of white rosettes and blue diamonds edged with yellow. In the façade there were three wide arches. Through them could be seen the throne-room.[27] The entire hall, fifty-six feet by a hundred and seventy, was without decoration—only flat white surfaces, painted with a wash of gypsum or lime which was renewed periodically.[28] Curiosities and splendours other than those of the events which took place there could not have been tolerated within those four characterless walls; but for the edification of future ages they held the memory of the greatest happenings of past reigns.

Passing on his right the two houses[29] which Nebuchadnezzar had set apart, close to himself, for his two most distinguished generals—Nebuzar-adan, the Commander-in-Chief, and Neriglissar, whose successes were to win him the additional honour of being the King's son-in-law—Ashpenaz crossed the court to the double doors of solid bronze. He went along the

corridor which connected the fine new palace with the grim dwelling of the ancient Kings of Babylon, and entered a dark antechamber.[30] Fat old eunuchs squatted along the walls, apparently sleeping, but awake, hand on dagger. Three priests, who were waiting in the shadow, rose before Ashpenaz and silently followed him into the royal house, to which its thick walls gave an air of power and mystery. Nebuchadnezzar had insisted on living in this place where his father had lived,[31] where he himself had spent his happy youth and to which he used to return for a few brief hours of relaxation during the war for the liberation of Babylon.

The King's bedroom, which has been identified, was in that part of the Palace which his father Nabopolassar had chosen as the place in which his coffin was to be walled up.[32] It was surprisingly small. The blaze of the sunlight outside came in, tempered, through a round opening in the vault, and was reflected by the silvery pallor of the stuccoed walls. In one corner were the famous fountains of sweetened water, salt water, and fresh water, with their gold goblets.

Nebuchadnezzar was still asleep on his narrow bed, a hard wooden structure on lion's legs. Ashpenaz respectfully woke him. Then the eunuch and the two priests, one of whom was an *ashipu*, or special priest of Marduk, whose incantations "purified the sick man and made him clean", and the other a magician, at once drew back. Another eunuch brought in a magnificent person in a high tiara and a long pleated robe, the King's physician, a priest, whom history has treated less kindly than the physician of Ashurbanipal, for it has not preserved his name.[33] He was a very important individual. Only the members of the reigning family and the officials of the Palace were allowed the benefit of his consultations and treatment. His fee was fixed: ten shekels for every successful cure or operation.[34] The current tariff for his Babylonian



PLAN OF THE PALACE

A. Entrance-court, with jar-factories. B. Court of the Chancelleries. c. Large gate in which the King's court of justice was held. C. Court of the Throne-room. D. The King's apartments, preceded by the door connecting the old palace of Nabopolassar with the new palace of Nebuchadnezzar. E. Harem of Nebuchadnezzar. F. Throne-room. G-I. Sacred Way. H. Ishtar Gate. K. Fortifications of the Citadel

From Koldeway. By courtesy of the J. C. Hinrichs'scher Buchhandlung-Verlag

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confrères was only five shekels, and even, if the patient was a slave, two shekels.[35]

The three priests had donned the long white pleated robe in respect for royalty, for they usually officiated without anything on at all. All three were " splendid men, perfect in presence and size ", as was required by tradition for the exercise of every priestly function. Between them they embodied the entire resources of Babylonian medicine—the prayer, incantation, and magic which eked out a rudimentary knowledge of drugs and anatomy.[36] Religion was the very basis of medicine; sickness was merely evidence of the anger of the gods. If a man transgressed, they sent one demon or another to take possession of some part of the sinner's body, to make him suffer.[37] On the whole, the demon was the mythical ancestor of the microbe,[38] as the agent of the divine vengeance.

The King still complained of pain, fairly intense but intermittent, in his joints and right side. He was rather feverish. Yet he had not sinned, so the malady could not be very serious. The exorcist and the magician looked anxiously at the physician. Yesterday he had said that the King was suffering from *bennu* (rheumatism). But why, then, had their prayers and treatment no effect? Was there not some error in his diagnosis? The physician trembled in every limb, and his face paled with an expression of undescribable anguish. If he had made a mistake, to-morrow he would be flayed alive and all his family would be cut to pieces. Humbly prostrating himself at the foot of the King's bed, the wretched man murmured: " The King, my Lord, still declares that he is ill. Do you not know what is wrong? For I confess that I have not understood this ailment."

He feverishly pulled out of his ample garments little tablets,[39] on which were written, in three columns, symptoms, remedies, and prescriptions for the use of

the latter. In a voice which he strove to make firm, he prescribed: "Let the King, my Lord, apply the Ninib cure this time.[40] If the King does that, the fever will leave the King, my Lord, at the first application. It must, however, be applied a second and a third time to the King, my Lord, and that vigorously. I shall come and inquire as soon as an abundant sweat has come to the King, my Lord. Then I shall send my Lord something to apply to his neck."[41]

Impatient of all these prescriptions, which followed one another without ever curing him, Nebuchadnezzar rose.[42] He did not even listen to the *ashipu*, who was chanting, without much conviction: "Ea, King of Apsu, behold, I am the *ashipu* thy servant! I am the herald of Marduk, the wise incantation-maker, eldest son of Ea! Let the man whom I touch be whole and safe!"

Eunuchs brought the heavy ceremonial garments worn inside the Palace—the long white tunic bordered with a fringe of four rows of beads, the sandals painted red and blue, the broad sword-belt, and the sword, the ancestral *harpe*, in its jewelled sheath. They undressed the King, and covered him with the court mantle, a chasuble embroidered with large daisies. At the door, two of them stood harnessed to a small gold chariot, the ivory pole of which had a lion's head at the end.[43] Nebuchadnezzar mounted on the chariot, holding in his hand the traditional ivory sceptre. Behind him, Ashpenaz held the umbrella, the symbol of omnipotence, and gently turned it, like a great flower, over the royal head. Melzar waved the fly-flapper, a tuft of large feathers, and the King rapidly proceeded to the throne-room, where his council of ministers awaited him.

Meanwhile, under the burning sun, the long caravan of camels which brought Zedekiah, his retinue,[44] his tribute, and his gifts, was nearing Babylon.

Zedekiah was talking cheerfully with Seraiah, his Grand Chamberlain. He hoped that this visit, by which he meant to renew his homage to his overlord in person, would lull any suspicions which Nebuchadnezzar might have conceived. With two more years of peace, he could complete his work, and establish a series of anti-Babylonian alliances which should enable Jerusalem to recover her independence, and himself to strengthen his authority over his people.

Really, a king's business had become impossible in Jerusalem.[45] The demagogic instincts of the people were roused to frenzy by prophets who became more numerous and more violent every day, and they regarded the King as the enemy of Jehovah. In the eyes of those fanatics, Jehovah was the only friend of the people; he did not want an empire built on material wealth and power, which benefited nobody but the great ones of the earth. Undermined by their propagandistic prophecies and libellous curses, the royal power grew weaker every day. Round the Temple, mystical exaltation was turning to madness; the people delighted in the misfortunes of Israel, because they punished the King, and with him the anti-prophetic party, for their pride, their depravity, and the wealth which they got from the sufferings of the people.[46] Not from Zedekiah did the people expect deliverance. Coming from him, it would make the weight of the royal authority and the caprices of the caste which surrounded and advised him still harder for the poor and disinherited to bear. Only Jehovah would bring the true deliverance, of which the prophets declared that it would fill men's hearts with the joy which can be found apart from riches and pleasures.

But what would remain of all these prophecies and exaltations if he, Zedekiah, delivered the kingdom of Judah from the dominion of the stranger and restored Jehovah to his temporal omnipotence, as in the days

of David and Solomon? Last year, in 595, the kings of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Tyre, and Sidon had answered to his appeal with enthusiasm.[47] In Jerusalem itself, they had signed a secret pact, binding them to unite to shake off the Babylonian yoke. Pharaoh, it was true, was still doubtful, but was it not in his interest, in spite of the treaty of Pelusium, to join them? Moreover, against Jeremiah and his abominable pro-Babylonianism, a patriotic party and a whole school of prophets had risen up at the call of Hananiah, son of Azzur, of Gibeon. When Zedekiah had left Jerusalem in order to gull Nebuchadnezzar by an act of outward self-humiliation, he had heard the national feeling surging in the mob itself, when someone shouted, to insult him, Hananiah's prophecy, "Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon!"[48]

The Grand Chamberlain Seraiah was less confident than his master. He deplored the agitation which was kept up among the people by the demagogic prophecies of Jeremiah. By undermining all the institutions of Israel—the kingship, the army, all its living forces—it laid the frontiers open to foreign greed more effectively than defeat or treason would have done. The prophecies accustomed the people to the idea of a complete bondage agreeable to the will of Jehovah. In the streets of Jerusalem, the terrible *nabi* still went about unceasingly, with his head bowed under a clumsy wooden yoke, which he had made himself, as a symbol of the captivity which awaited Jerusalem if she tried to recover her independence. The wrath of Jehovah thundered through his voice: "I made the earth, the man, and the beast that are upon the ground; and now have I given all these lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, my servant, and the beasts of the field have I given him also to serve him. And it shall come to pass, that the nation which will not put their neck under the

yoke of the King of Babylon, that nation will I punish with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence." [49]

Zedekiah remained silent for a moment. He knew well that wills were broken and hearts were softened by fear. But he pointed out to the Chamberlain that the eloquence of Hananiah, who stood for hope against resignation, also found a way into Israelitish hearts. All had applauded frantically when the prophet of hope had seized the sham yoke of wood from the shoulders of the prophet of despair, and had broken it. "Thus saith the Lord: Even so will I break the yoke of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, from the neck of all nations within the space of two full years." [50] Seraiah then reminded the King of Jeremiah's insolent reply: "Thou hast broken the yokes of wood; but thou shalt make for them yokes of iron." [51]

How would the deported Jews, and above all the prophet Ezekiel,[52] the "great consoler of the exiles," receive their King when they saw him come to humble himself in Babylon? Would those who were for rising against the oppressor not interpret his diplomatic action as an abandonment, as a final resignation? The active propaganda conducted by Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, for revolt under the King's standard might suffer by it. In any case, the prophets Ezekiel and Shemaiah would not fail to take advantage of it.[53] They would seize on every pretext for opposing the King. Only that morning, Seraiah had learned from an Israelite who had run away from Babylon that Ezekiel had, in order to unmask Zedekiah's real intentions, spread a horrible pamphlet about the low quarters of Babylon, denouncing his secret armaments and negotiations. "Nebuchadnezzar", it said in effect, "is doing the work of Providence; we must respect him. Zedekiah is acting culpably. He has sworn to Nebuchadnezzar not to arm, to remain humble and weak, and he never

ceases to ask Egypt for war-chariots and troops. In doing so, he insults Jehovah, who has given the power to Nebuchadnezzar. He will be punished for his perjury, and taken to Babylon, where he will expiate his crime. His army will be destroyed and the remnants of the nation will be scattered." [54]

Zedekiah and Seraiah fell silent; on the horizon rose the walls and towers of Babylon, and they gazed at the city, mysterious and formidable behind its triple wall of red brick. As ramparts, terraces, stairs, and gardens became clearer, the anxiety at the bottom of their hearts grew more acute.

In the throne-room of the Royal Palace of Babylon, which was connected with the private apartments by small rooms at the back, the light only entered parsimoniously through the openings on the central court,[55] softened by purple hangings embroidered with gold and silver, and casting pink and pearly white reflections on the plaster and gypsum with which the walls were coated. Under a copper arch, which had recently been set with sapphires,[56] was the throne of the Kings of Babylon. It was probably like those of the Assyrian conquerors, which so often appear on the reliefs; a high chair of gold and silver with a back, its legs resting on gold pine-cones, with figures of warriors on the sides, arranged four by four with upraised arms to support the cross-pieces. Nebuchadnezzar sat expressionless. The Babylonian tiara lay heavy on his head. The agitation of his thoughts could only be guessed from the nervous movement which occasionally sent a faint tremor through the feet in their red and blue sandals or the hand which held the ivory sceptre. A rod of command lay on the ground. At the foot of the throne, alone on a very simple stool with lions' feet, sat his heir, Evil-Merodach, now aged sixteen. Behind the throne, Melzar and Ashpenaz fanned the King with a slow, regular motion.[57]

Sarsechim, the Chief of the Eunuchs, introduced the ministers in turn. Nebuzar-adan, the Grand Vizier, governor of the country, and Commander-in-Chief of the Babylonian armies, presented himself first. A diadem of precious stones set in the form of daisies made a glittering halo round his head, the tiara being worn only by the King and the High Priest. Across his short-sleeved, fringed tunic he wore a scarf embroidered with a triple row of gorgeous rosettes. He stepped forward slowly ; his blue sandals made no sound on the floor of asphalt and brick, but his earrings, necklaces, and innumerable bangles clinked metallically in time to his catlike tread. As all would do who came after him, as soon as he came through the purple door-hanging, he prostrated himself before the King, and then, rising, made the ritual gesture of worship. With his left hand resting on the pommel of the sword in his broad belt, he raised his right hand to the level of his face and extended it towards the King with closed fist, only letting the thumb emerge between the first and middle fingers.[58]

Having finished his mail in the Chaldæan Chancellery, Nergalorosor, the Chief of the Magicians and chief governor of the country, came next, a skeleton in his long white pleated robe. He was followed by the chief finance-minister, Nergal-sharezer, the keeper of the royal treasury of Cuthah ; the young minister of State, Bel-shum-ishkun, Nergalorosor's son, who would presently succeed his father as Chief of the Magicians ; and Neriglissar, who was hardly older, but was the most conspicuous man in Babylon, the richest after the King and the mainspring of the military party.

Last came the young Governor of Babylon, Nabonidus,[59] whom Nebuchadnezzar loved especially, because he was the son of Shumua-Damqa, the priestess of the Moon at Harran, who had been the King's first love. To secure her son's future, Nebu-

chadnezzar had made Nabu-balatsu-iqbi, his father, a *rubu*, or prince.[60] So it had been possible to educate the boy at the Court, and to-day, though barely aged twenty-five, he had been called by the King to the office of Governor of the capital and the official title of *sha eli ali* (who is over the city), or *apil amel sharruti* (son of the man of royalty).[61] Nebuchadnezzar was thinking of marrying him to his own favourite daughter, Nitocris. She was the issue of his marriage with the Egyptian Nitocris, and her precocious intelligence was the admiration of the Court. Having thus indulged his sentimental impulse, the King, gazing at the crafty face of Neriglissar, thought that it would be good for the security of the throne if he neutralized the ambitions and greed of that intriguer by marrying him to another of his daughters.[62]

Nergal-sharezer, the finance-minister, was the first to incur the royal displeasure. He respectfully informed his sovereign that the tribute due from the provinces and cities subjected to the overlordship of Babylon by war or alliance was coming in satisfactorily. He had already recovered the thirty talents from Arpad, the hundred from Carchemish, the thirty from Kuhe, the fifteen from Megiddo, the fifteen from Mansuate, the five from Calah, the four from the immediate neighbourhood of the same town, the thirty from the surrounding hill-country, and the ten from Enil.[63] Within the kingdom, taxes were being paid equally readily. The King's conquests had brought the country a prosperity which showed the people that they were getting value in return for the taxes which they paid. Contrary to modern fiscal principles, the taxation imposed on various things was carefully graded. In each district and in each big capital, the bases of the administrative organization of the kingdom,[64] on which the payment of a lump sum was imposed by the central office of finance, the use of the taxes had been considered satisfactory. The Mayor of the Palace was

pleased to hear that the city of Alikhu would pay two-thirds of the amount required to guarantee the "security of the gates", and would, in addition, pay a certain number of talents towards the astronomical services, three talents for the royal fringed robes, two for the royal purple robes, and two for the maintenance of the throne.[65] The minister also reported that the servants of the royal household had paid the tithe due in return for their offices and privileges—the Commander-in-Chief, two talents, the Servants of the Concubines, five, the Carpenters, male and female, two, the Director of Music, one. The list went on interminably, from the kitchens to the granary, monotonous in the very variety of the employments mentioned. The final total of revenues at last came to one hundred and ninety talents and ten *manehs*, less than the estimated returns by seven talents and ten *manehs*.[66]

The finance-minister stopped speaking, and all eyes were turned on the King. The silence was such, that everyone held his breath for fear of disturbing it. All saw the dull anger rise into Nebuchadnezzar's inexpressive face and flow in purple waves over his pale cheeks. If there was a deficit in the budget, it was because, in spite of the reassuring declarations of the Governors, obligingly repeated by the finance-minister, the taxes were not coming in regularly. Some claimed exemption in virtue of privileges which he, the King, would not allow. There had been no word of the taxes due from the temples, which ought to be paid properly. The clergy were only too much inclined to evade the King's control and to extend their prerogatives while filling their coffers.[67] Other taxpayers were merely careless—nomads, who hoped to dodge the tax-collector, husbandmen, stock-breeders, fishermen, boatmen on the canals and rivers. Before holding the council, Nebuchadnezzar had consulted the tablets on which the returns due from each class of society were set out, and he knew quite well that the

truth was being concealed from him. He did not want any more lying. He wanted to know the exact sum of which his treasury had been defrauded, down to the last shekel, down to the last cab. Call the temple-officials and provincial collectors at once, and let them show their accounts! If their consciences were uneasy, let them look to their heads! His face was so terrible that all fell back. In the light of his wrath, as if in a sudden illumination, he saw all the fraudulent connivances written on the pale faces of his ministers. He angrily called for a scribe, and a shaven-headed man bowed at his feet and took down on fresh clay the order dictated by the royal lips: "When you see this tablet, let all the heads of the houses of the gods together bring you their accounts. Let them bring them all. Send them to Babylon, that they may show their accounts. Let them travel night and day." [68]

Nergalorosor, very white, mastered his fear and suggested that the shepherds and herdsmen of the King and the temples should be summoned to Babylon to present their accounts, for the flocks and herds entrusted to their care in all the provinces were the chief source of revenue for the King's treasury. The Governors did not, perhaps, show all the requisite zeal in protecting them or in supervising them. It would be a good thing that they should know that the King had his eye on them. The anger choking Nebuchadnezzar burst out again, and the scribe wrote his will on the clay: "Nebuchadnezzar speaks as follows to the Governors: [69] When you receive this tablet, send the forty-seven shepherds of the River District to me, to give in their accounts." All the ministers stood with crossed arms and bent heads, while Nergalorosor straightened his thin figure with an air of satisfaction.

Then Nebuchadnezzar turned to Nabonidus in his turn. He questioned him about the concessions of land on the royal domain which should be made to his servants and soldiers, as was done every year, as a

reward of their services and a guarantee of their fidelity.[70] Nabonidus made proposals, and he agreed. "One piece of land shall be given to Sin Mustal, one to Ili Idimman, one to Ili Ismam." The scribe held up the clay tablet, and Nebuchadnezzar caused his seal to be affixed, authenticating his sovereign will, which meant a contract and a title of ownership for the fortunate holder.

KING NABU-MUKIN-APLI, THE FOUNDER OF THE EIGHTH DYNASTY, GRANTING LAND TO WARAD-SIBITTI AND HIS SISTER.
From boundary-stone No. 90835 in the British Museum.

The King then asked Nebuzar-adan for information about the recruiting of the army [71]—the army without which the kingdom could have no security and his own dreams of conquest would perish like smoke. He listened with satisfaction to the figures from each province—the numbers of each contingent and the proportion of exempted men and mercenaries. He approved rewards and punishments, compliments and reprimands. He ordered that exemptions from service should be granted less freely, and that the practice of paying for substitutes,[72] which had contributed largely

to the decline of the Assyrian army, by filling it with mercenaries, should be discouraged.[73] The Commander-in-Chief must enforce Article XXVI of Hammurabi's Code strictly: "If an officer or man of the army, having received orders to march in an expedition of the King, does not march, even if he has engaged a mercenary, he is punishable with death, and whoever takes his place will take his house."[74] That the army might, moreover, be well supplied with war-material and comfortably equipped, Nebuchadnezzar decided to make a levy on fortunes. All whom age or infirmities dispensed from service in case of war and who had sufficient means, should pay a tax sufficient to maintain and equip a mercenary in their place when the occasion arose.

The Captain of the Palace, a worthy successor of the famous Bel-kharran-Bel-utsur,[75] next came forward, and handed to the King an urgent message just brought by a courier. A scribe read the tablet. It was from Bel-ibni, who made his excuses for not having come to the King's audience, to which he had been summoned twice. He asked that the favour of an audience might be granted to his friend Mushezib-Marduk. Nebuchadnezzar at once dictated the answer, for which the courier was waiting: "Message from the King to Bel-ibni, who enjoys the royal favour: I am well, let your heart be content. Mushezib-Marduk, regarding whom you have written to me, shall be admitted to my presence in the fulness of time. I shall establish the path of his feet."

Outside, the throng was now dense round the Palace. It surged in the streets, in the courts, almost into the throne-room, while a hubbub rose from the city-gates and the outlying quarters. Zedekiah and his suite were coming. The Sacred Way was particularly crowded. The tide of humanity beat against the asphalt-daubed red walls, and figures clung to them like swarms of bees. Through the multitude,

THE TRIBUTE OF JEHU TO SHALMANESER

From the Black Obelisk in the British Museum

[*face p.* 128

suddenly grown silent with the weariness of waiting, a long line of camels and dromedaries made its way with difficulty. Heavy bundles bobbed up and down with their slouching gait. It was the tribute from Israel, and at the sight of those riches the eyes of the crowd expressed the pride and greed which their lips did not utter. Golden-skinned children, naked save for a copper bangle or two, squeezed their way to the front and gazed delightedly at the capers of some little monkeys which were leaping from a camel on to a dromedary. Their laughter was stilled on their very lips by an awe in which, young as they were, there was a good deal of cupidity. Long, lean Israelites in pointed caps were going by, carrying bowls, jars, and vases of gold destined for Nebuchadnezzar. Behind them Zedekiah walked alone, followed by Seraiah. Everyone in the crowd had been waiting for him. Such a miserable king was a marvel to them. How could a people tolerate a kingship which did not bring it wealth? They all leaned forward to see.

Zedekiah walked on, looking straight before him, followed by the confused murmuring of the crowd. With straining eyes, he was gazing up the Sacred Way to where, on the left, he could see the high terraces of the Palace of Nebuchadnezzar, the master whom he meant to betray.

On the threshold of the wide gate stood Sarsechim, whose duty it was to introduce embassies, a little black figure against the sunlit front of the palace. He stepped forward slowly, with eyes lowered and arms crossed over his chest. He went before Zedekiah into the throne-room, where the high officials stood in their ranks. In the sudden darkness, the King of Judah stood still for a moment. Nebuchadnezzar leaned forward on his throne, trying to read the secret of the pale, delicate face with the aquiline nose. But beneath that imperious interrogatory, the eagle eyes of the King of Judah were demurely hidden under his

long black lashes. Followed by Seraiah and the messengers who bore the tribute, he advanced towards the throne, and they all prostrated themselves, to kiss the earth before the glorious overlord from whom Zedekiah held his kingship in Jerusalem.[76]

Over the curved backbones, the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar broke out in furious words. "There is now peace between Judah and Babylon; but will Judah really maintain it by every possible means? Nebuchadnezzar knows that Zedekiah, in contempt of Babylon's rights of overlordship, in contempt of treaties, has received the ambassadors of Pharaoh, of the Kings of Moab, of others yet, and that they have all conspired against Babylon. Let Zedekiah henceforward turn a deaf ear to the treacherous counsels of those lawless princes. Otherwise there will be war."

Nebuchadnezzar stood up, raging, to close the audience. His ministers were silent. Zedekiah rose trembling from the ground. The sweat poured down his livid face; his heart thumped so loudly that he thought that it must betray his emotion to others. At Seraiah he cast a despairing glance, in which his mad hopes of deliverance could be seen dying. Had he been betrayed, then? Always betrayed—but by whom? Only the men of Jehovah could have done it. They communicated with each other across the great desert every day, echoing each other's criminal prophecies, lying libels, false news. The defeatism of Ezekiel in Babylon was only a replica of the curses of Jeremiah in Jerusalem, and its fruit was treason. By treason the prophets of evil hoped to overthrow the authority of the King of Judah for a spiritual authority by which they should benefit. While Zedekiah was humbly offering to Nebuchadnezzar the tributes and gifts of Israel, his ears were ringing with the words with which Jeremiah had saluted his departure: "Bring your necks under the yoke of the King of Babylon, and live! Why will ye die, thou and thy

people, as the Lord hath spoken against the nation that will not serve the King of Babylon?" [77]

Zedekiah was in a perfect agony. All his efforts to revive the patriotism of the Jewish people, all his diplomacy in forming alliances which should aid Jerusalem in the struggle against Babylon, even the humiliation of the present embassy, to which he had only consented in order to allay his overlord's suspicions, all were useless. They were all brought to nought by the combined effect of Nebuchadnezzar's ambition and Jeremiah's spite. Just now, when the King of Babylon's anger had been roaring above his head, he had felt clearly that it was only the echo of the imprecations of Jeremiah.

But in the hearts of those of his people who had been brought here after the surrender four years ago, would he not find other sentiments? A longing for the Kingdom of Israel, for its Temple, for the splendid destiny promised by Jehovah? Did they not suffer cruelly from the yoke of proud Babylon, from its hard materialism? He wanted to see those exiles, to make them feel their degradation, to prepare them to rise for freedom when he should come with his army and that of Pharaoh. He asked Seraiah to take him along the canals, to the villages of Tel-Melah, Tel-Harsa, Cherub, and Addan,[78] which were inhabited entirely by Jews engaged in agriculture.

Seraiah remained sceptical. These Israelites could not desire a revolt of Jerusalem against Babylon. One must not count on them. Their hearts might be still faithful to Jehovah, but they were now citizens of Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar had not deprived them of their all; he had even helped them to buy land.[79] Gain meant much to the Jew, and most of the exiles were now content with their lot, which enabled them to profit by the rapid and continual economic development of Babylon.[80] They kept their souls as a

kingdom for Jehovah—a spiritual kingdom which they were prepared to spread over the whole earth. Their material home was that which gave them material prosperity and the financial power with which, moreover, they intended to conquer the world for Jehovah.

Zedekiah did not want to give up hope. His duty as a king bade him take one last step, and he carried Seraiah with him. Night had come. He made his way rapidly along the Euphrates to Hillah. As they approached, a red glow spread in the dark sky, and sparks poured out of the great kilns in which the bricks were baked with which Nebuchadnezzar built his temples and his palaces. Among the prisoners of war who, crippled, bent, half-naked, toiled day and night in that inferno, Zedekiah recognized those of the children of Israel who had fought against Nebuchadnezzar for freedom up to the last moment. These were the men to understand him. Ahab, son of Kolaiah, and Zedekiah, son of Maaseiah, kept the lamp of hope alight in their souls. But what could they do? His heart was wrung to see them thus wretched, chained to their frightful deadening labour, while at Tel-Melah and Tel-Harsa those who had denied their God and their country and had gone over to the conqueror—and they were the majority—were resting, satisfied with the day's business, enjoying the pleasant evening on the terraces of handsome houses, while slaves hastened to serve them.

On the north bank of the Chebar, the magnificent canal which Nebuchadnezzar had dug to connect the Tigris and Euphrates and to increase the economic power of Babylon, Zedekiah saw the lights of Tel-Abib. There, round the little house of Ezekiel, son of Buzi, the Israelite tribes were gathered, faithful to the customs of Jerusalem. It was no good going to them. Ezekiel was for ever preaching submission and resignation to them, and the success of their business in Babylon made them willing hearers.

Zedekiah knew that for his obstinacy in resistance and for his own intrigues and those of his party with a view to liberation, duly reported to Ezekiel every day by a merchant or a runaway slave from Jerusalem, the prophet had described him as the " bad shepherd " who was responsible for Jehovah's wrath and the humiliation of his people. Even if those tribes were still faithful to Jehovah, they were against him, Zedekiah, whom Jehovah had cursed and would destroy by the sword of Nebuchadnezzar. Ezekiel, like Jeremiah, assured them that the return to their country could only be granted after chastisement.

" Thus saith the Lord God : Behold I, even I, will both search my flock and seek them out. They were scattered, because there is no shepherd. Woe be to the shepherds of Israel, that did feed themselves ! Behold, I judge between cattle and cattle, between the rams and the he-goats. And I will set up one shepherd over them." [81]

" Bring your necks under the yoke of the King of Babylon, and live ! " [82]

Zedekiah abandoned the hopeless struggle. What realities more brilliant than those which were offered to them by Babylon, the queen of the world's trade, could he produce in opposition to the dreams with which Ezekiel, in his pious exaltation, soothed such home-sickness and scruples as they felt ? What had he to bid against the hope, for ever renewed and dis-appointed, of the approaching time when Jehovah would reign over all the earth ?

A man was going their way. Seraiah recognized him as one of the messengers who brought the exiles news of their lost home, and called him. He was a poor rag of a man, who tremblingly gave to Zedekiah the clay tablet which he carried. The King deciphered the Aramaic characters with difficulty in the light of the moon.

" Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel,

unto all whom I have caused to be carried away from Jerusalem unto Babylon: Build ye houses, and dwell in them; and plant gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters, that ye may be increased there, and not diminished. And seek the peace of the city whither I have caused you to be carried away captives, and pray unto the Lord for it: for in the peace thereof shall ye have peace. For after seventy years be accomplished I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." [83] Zedekiah questioned the man. Who had given him the tablet? Elasah, son of Shaphan, and Gemariah, son of Hilkiah, who had had it from Jeremiah, with instructions to read it in the public places.[84]

Jeremiah, as usual! And the very men whom he thought he could trust were helping Jeremiah—Elasah and Gemariah, whom he had sent to Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon to arrange about the tribute with which he had come to-day!

Zedekiah took the road back to Babylon, where his escort was waiting for him, for the return journey to Jerusalem. A thousand thoughts whirled in his head. Phantoms brushed him in the darkness. He shivered. The sense of the treachery of the prophets took definite shape in his mind and filled him with overwhelming depression. He was very soon at the gates of the city, whose prosperity had never before seemed so insolent, so brutal. He was still in a maze when, coming out of the deep shadow of the walls, he found himself once more in the quiet plain, under the calm light of the moon. Behind him Babylon was sinking to rest, huge and mysterious in its spectral immobility, a pile of great moonlit blocks against the blue and starry void. Under that coruscating splendour, it seemed, more than ever, in its strength and monstrous size, a worthy

capital of vulgar ambition and gross self-seeking. Zedekiah turned his face towards Jerusalem, far away below the horizon—but still the sadness remained in his heart. No less than Babylon, his own city, delivered to the enemy by her prophets more surely than by her traitors, was something foreign to him, which he could not understand.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FOUR

[1] In his great inscription, Nebuchadnezzar speaks as follows of the building of this new palace, the greater part of the Southern Citadel of the city. He caused his architect Labashi to build it in front of the old palace of his father, adjoining it.

" Nabopolassar, the father who begot me, had begun to build a palace of brick, and had dug its foundations deep below the water. There I made foundations of brick, I laid the foundation-stone. For the roofing I used great beams and timbers of cedar shod with iron. I adorned the doors with varnished bricks and inscriptions and paintings. There I heaped up gold, and silver, and metals, and stones of every kind and every value ; I brought together a whole precious thing, treasures innumerable. There I set a valiant legion, the defence of my kingship" (East India House Inscr., col. vii, ll. 48 ff.). " I did not set up the throne of my kingship in another city in the land of Chaldæa. I did not choose a seat of my sovereignty elsewhere. But in Babylon alone I raised the palace of my abode, which holds the treasuries of my imperishable kingship," he goes on in the next column.

[2] Pallis (*The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, p. 66) reminds us that this palace was bounded on the west by the Euphrates, on the north by the Canal of Marduk, and on the west by the Aibur-shabu Canal. " The measurements . . . are amply sufficient for those very ancient cities. The acropolis of Tiryns, with its length of 492 feet and breadth of 164 feet, could be placed inside the eastern part of the Southern Citadel. The Mycenæan city of Troy is also considerably smaller, with its 426 by 590 feet " (Koldewey, *The Excavations at Babylon*, p. 87). The old doorway built by Nabopolassar is still in perfect preservation (King, *History of Babylon*, p. 39).

[3] Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 71–127 ; King, *History*, pp. 38–49 ; Pallis, *The Babylonian Akitu Festival*, pp. 65–7.

[4] Margolis and Marx, *Histoire du peuple juif*, p. 180 ; Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, vol. iii ; see also below, this chapter.

[5] The chief door, the east door of the Southern Citadel. Koldewey, pp. 72–90.

[6] December and February correspond to our autumn and spring. The only cold is in January, when, if there is no sun,

there is hoar-frost. There are hardly more than seven or eight days of rain in the year.

Bricks with the stamp of Nebuchadnezzar were found in the south-west corner of this court. The inscription runs : " Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, restorer of Esagila and Ezida, son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon." Herodotos thought that the brick-kilns, usually situated on the outskirts of the city, must have been set up quite close to the new palace when it was being built. The bricks have been removed for use as building-material by every people which has since come to Babylon (Koldewey, p. 82).

[7] The Biblical name of Nebuchadnezzar's Chief Eunuch, who entered Jerusalem with other high Babylonian officials (Jer. xxxix, 3, 11, 15).

[8] For the costume of the eunuchs, see the famous reliefs from the palace of Sargon, now in the Louvre. They are reproduced in every work of Assyrian history, e.g., in Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, and in Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. v.

[9] Their hair-dressing resembled the wigs of the time of Louis XIV.

[10] See also the eunuchs of the Assyro-Babylonian courts (Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, vol. i).

[11] " In Babylon, not only children, but youths who had reached the age of puberty were made into eunuchs " (*Dictionnaire de la Bible*, col. 2043 ; cf. Hdt., iii, 49 ; vi, 32). The effects were effeminacy, the development of the vices, melancholia, and a tendency to suicide. The appearance became fat, coarse, and heavy.

[12] The most celebrated eunuchs of antiquity have been Bagoas, the King-maker, the eunuch of Alexander the Great ; Nero's Sporus ; the Pothinus of Ptolemy XIV ; the Eutropios Mnemophilos of Mithradates. Some of them were able to display their low vices in the government of states ; but in Babylon the only activities allowed to them, apart from their duties in the harem, were the functions of scribe, musician, priest, messenger, huntsman, and umbrella-bearer.

[13] The most famous Captain of the Palace was that of Tiglath-pileser in 741, Bel-kharran-Bel-utsur (Maspero, vol. iii, p. 207). He owned a considerable estate north of Ashur, by the R. Tartar, where he enjoyed royal prerogatives, building temples to his gods and so on. We know of him from his stele, which was found on the site of his estate, at Tall-Abta.

[14] Koldewey, p. 72. A large number of *alabastra* have been found here. Rooms 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12 were evidently warehouses. There seem to have been no windows. The evening and night were spent on the roof in that hot climate.

[15] We find a great number of scribes, male and female, at all periods, and some of them rose to the highest dignities. For the art of writing and schools, see above, ch. ii, n. 48. Many tablets from the age of Hammurabi give evidence of the methods followed in education, which are described below, ch. x. The scribe took a pride in his science; he signed his efforts, and he had his title engraved on his seal-cylinder. A special scribe was attached to the house of Barnamtara, the wife of King Lugalanda; his seal bears the legend, "Eniggal, Scribe of the House of the Woman". The scribes were trained in the shadow of the temples; so they gradually came to form a special caste attached to the administrators of the sanctuaries, and in the Neo-Babylonian epoch the two functions were almost always combined in certain cities, Sippar in particular (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 198–9).

[16] Koldewey, p. 90. The house on the south of the court, with a great hall in front of it, is exceptionally spacious. This is the building which I suppose to be the Chaldæan Chancellery. On the north of the court, Koldewey says, there is a house with two courts and two offices.

[17] "It was Tiglath-pileser (745–722) who gave Assyria the form which she had during the most glorious century of her existence, and his organization was so suited to the Oriental character that it survived the fall of Nineveh. It was the type which empire-builders followed down to the Macedonian period" (Maspero, vol. iii, pp. 205 ff.).

[18] This is the system which all empires have to adopt when, instead of confining themselves to a single self-contained and clearly bounded nation, they take in a variety of peoples. It was the principle of the bureaucratic administration of Austria-Hungary just before the recent war.

[19] Maspero (vol. iii, p. 519) tells us that at this time the greater part of Elam was subject to the Achæmenid rulers of Persia. Their capital was Ecbatana. Chaldæa had received as its share of the old Iranian territory the wooded country of the Uknu and Ulai rivers, where Aramæan tribes lived—the Paugu, Rutu, Gambulu. But Susa was outside Babylonian control, although some historians think that after Nebuchadnezzar's subsequent Egyptian campaign his son Evil-Merodach conquered the city. This chancellery also dealt with the few Arab tribes which obeyed Nebuchadnezzar, and with relations with Arabia. The Aramæan districts comprised those which spoke the Aramaic language, i.e., Judah, Tyre, Sidon, Moab, Ammon, Philistia, Nabatene, etc.

[20] Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. iii, p. 201.

[21] This letter was really written to Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria, as were most of those which follow, for the most

complete correspondence has been found in his library (Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. v, pp. 49 ff.; Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 344; *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iii). The diplomatic correspondence of the great Nebuchadnezzar has not yet been found. But all his inscriptions authorize us in supposing that it was very similar to Ashurbanipal's, and that is why I have ventured to describe the scene as I have done.

[22] Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes*, vol. iv, p. 392.

[23] To be able to govern their subjects of foreign race and language more easily, the kings of Chaldæa and Assyria were in the habit of choosing from among them youths of good family and having them educated at their court. This practice, of which we formerly knew only from the Book of Daniel, is confirmed by cuneiform documents. An inscription of Sennacherib gives us the accidental information that foreigners were admitted to the Palace school, as we read in Daniel. The son of a Babylonian grandee, of the name of Bel-ibni was brought up, in the stock phrase, "to serve in the presence of the King", in Sargon's palace, and was afterwards placed by Sennacherib on the throne of Babylon. These children were brought up in the palace "like little dogs", *kima merani*, as the inscription says which speaks of young Bel-ibni: "Bel-ibni, son of the *Rabkak*, of the seed of Babylon, who like a little child within my palace had grown up, to the kingdom of Sumer and Akkad I appointed over them" (Bellino Cylinder in George Smith, *History of Sennacherib*, p. 27).

As will be seen later, I assume that the Book of Daniel was written four hundred years after Nebuchadnezzar's time, but we may, and indeed we must, suppose that young Israelites, variously named but immortalized by tradition as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were chosen to receive a Babylonian education and to "serve the master" in his palace (Taylor, *Records of the Past*, vol. i, p. 34; Layard, inscr., pl. lxiii).

[24] "Here we see clearly the idea of a government bureau. These gateway chambers I am disposed to regard as courts of justice, where the judge occupied the side-chambers, which could only be reached from the house, while the litigants made use of the gateway chambers, which could be reached both from the courts and from the gateways" (Koldewey, p. 90). This is also the opinion of King (*History*, pp. 40–1), and it is what we gather from the Neo-Babylonian contracts found in the remains of the city, which are dated from the Al-Bit-shar-Babili, "the City of the Palace of the King of Babylon".

"Whether the walls were left uncovered," writes Koldewey (pp. 88–9), "or whether they had a coat of plaster, we do not know. We know that the gateways at any rate were decorated

with the coloured enamelled bricks with lions, which are found in all the courts. The inner chambers were covered with a fine plaster of pure gypsum laid on over a thicker coating of gypsum. In the chamber of the eastern gateway there is still a piece of this remaining."

[25] Koldewey, pp. 102 ff. This was a court measuring 180 by 197 feet, under which the Sassanids afterwards buried their dead.

[26] " Since the walls on the longer sides " (of the throne-room) " are six metres thick, it is possible that they supported a barrel-vaulting " (King, *History*, p. 42). Koldewey (p. 104) says the same, and so does Philostratos in his *Life of Apollonios*.

[27] It is here that we may imagine, according to the historians best authorized to speak, that Belshazzar held his feast, fifty years later, while Cyrus entered the city by the bed of the Euphrates, having diverted the water. On these lime-washed or gypsum-faced walls the hand must have written its " Mene Mene Tekel Upharsin " (Koldewey, p. 103).

[28] King (*History*, pp. 43–4) explains the absence of decoration by the darkness of the room. " The palaces of the Kings of Babylon are covered over with copper, which makes them shine from afar," writes Philostratos in the *Life of Apollonios of Tyana*, speaking of Apollonios's residence in Babylon in the time of Nero. " The apartments of the women, those of the men, and the porticoes have, instead of paintings, decorations of silver, gold plating, or even solid gold." " Damis also says that he went with Apollonios into a hall, the dome of which represented the sky, being made of sapphire, a stone which, by its blue colour, does indeed imitate the sky. High up, there were gold statues of the gods worshipped in this country, which seemed to float in the air. It is there that the King dispenses justice. From the four corners of the vault, four wagtails were hung, to remind him of Nemesis and to warn him not to think himself more than a man."

[29] Koldewey, p. 103. One house had two courts, the other four.

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 113. It is called the Palace of Nabopolassar. See the account of the gigantic and ingenious operations which Labashi, the King's architect, had to perform in order to connect the two palaces, which were not on the same level. The new palace was much higher than the old, for the ground was always subsiding and the foundations of the latter were under water. The Gate of Ishtar affords evidence of this. The north wall of the old palace, with its crenelated top, is admirably preserved (Koldewey, p. 116). It is 262 feet long and has eighty crenelations.

[31] Koldewey, p. 118. The houses of this part of the palace

have remarkably strong walls. Houses 37, 38, and 39 are evidently royal dwellings. Under the threshold of one bedroom, which Koldewey was able to identify as such by the alcoves, a small statuette of the god Papsukal, the protector of the hearth, was found.

[32] Koldewey, pp. 118–20; King, *History*, p. 66. This was in the north-west corner of the palace. Koldewey considers that the hole must have been made on purpose and closed up with bricks bearing the stamp of Nebuchadnezzar. There is no doubt that the dead man was someone very important. Koldewey found here a very large coffin and a number of gold plates and beads, and he concludes: "When we consider that only a very small portion of the outfit has escaped the tomb-robbers, we realize that the body was provided with rich gold ornaments, and arrayed in garments richly spangled with gold, and that this personage during his lifetime must have occupied a very conspicuous and important position at the court of Babylon, our thoughts turn to Nabopolassar, and we almost wonder whether he himself had not been laid within his palace wall by his son."

[33] Morris Jastrow, *The Medicine of the Babylonians and Assyrians* (1914), p. 39. The correspondence of Arad-Nana and Ashurbanipal has been published in Harper, *Assyrian and Babylonian Letters*, Nos, 392, 118–111–115, 157.

[34] Less than an English pound.

[35] *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iii, p. 240; Jastrow, *op. cit.*, p. 4. Medicine takes as high a place as astronomy in Babylonian science. Texts from Ashur which cannot be later than the eighth century reveal a system of medicine and a great knowledge of maladies and drugs, animal, vegetable, and mineral. The methods of the physicians must not be confused with those of the sorcerers. Five hundred tablets from the library of Kuyunjik, now in the British Museum, treat of a medical science which, though empirical, was practical.

Most of the prescriptions have nothing to do with magic, but they use its language: "If a man has such-and-such a malady, then give him to drink (or apply) such-and-such a medicine, and he will be healed", a formula also used by Syrian and Hebrew medicine. A few tablets speak of the use of the surgeon's knife, and as early as the third millennium we find, in the Code of Hammurabi, laws penalizing unsuccessful operations.

No medical compilation has been found in Babylonia which can compare with the Ebers Papyrus, the Berlin Papyrus, and the Hearst Papyrus from Egypt, although, according to Jastrow, some such work must have existed; but we have series of tablets, which, as we shall see, point to a very advanced science.

[36] So we find in Babylon, by the side of the priest-physicians,

who alone had some scientific data, thanks to their researches, the *ashipus* or exorcists and the magicians with their horrible potions; and their methods have been the same from the days of Nebuchadnezzar to the cauldron of Macbeth's witches and the Black Masses of Mme. de Montespan.

[37] Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*; Jastrow, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[38] The Babylonians distinguished three main kinds of demon —the *ashakku*, the demon of exhaustion and tuberculosis, the *akhazu*, the " aggressive one ", the demon of jaundice and liver-complaints, and the *labartu*, the horrible monster of abortion and miscarriage (Jastrow, pp. 5, 7).

[39] Jastrow, p. 22.

[40] Jastrow, p. 49.

[41] Jastrow, p. 27.

[42] No bath or lavatory equipment has been found in Babylon. Sanitary arrangements must have been very primitive compared with the refinements of Egypt.

[43] See the representation of the King driving about the palace in a little chariot drawn by eunuchs, in Layard, *Monuments de Ninive*, 2nd ser., pl. xii.

[44] Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, vol. iii, pp. 314 ff.; Margolis and Marx, *Histoire du peuple juif*, p. 108; and all historians, following Jer., xxvii–xxviii.

[45] Renan, vol. iii, pp. 316 ff.

[46] *Ibid.*, pp. 326, 341.

[47] *Ibid.*, p. 315.

[48] Jer., xxviii, 11.

[49] Jer., xxvii.

[50] Renan, vol. iii, p. 318.

[51] *Ibid.*

[52] " The greatest consoler of the exiles in Babylon was Ezekiel. For over twenty years, this extraordinary man was the centre of the fiery preaching which rescued the consciousness of Israel from a tempest in which any other national consciousness would have perished. While Jerusalem still stood, he had been in communication with his brothers in Judæa; when Jerusalem and the Temple had gone, he was the staunch upholder of Jahvism as understood by the prophets " (*Ibid.*, p. 393).

[53] Ezekiel tells us that the word of the Lord first came to him by the banks of the Chebar on the fifth day of the fourth month of the fifth year of the captivity of King Jehoiachin. The First Exile had taken place in 598, so, since Zedekiah came on his embassy in 594, it was the fifth year of Jehoiachin's captivity. The first part of Ezekiel's work (iii, 22, to xxiv, 27) dealing with the captivity of Jerusalem, belongs entirely to this year. The

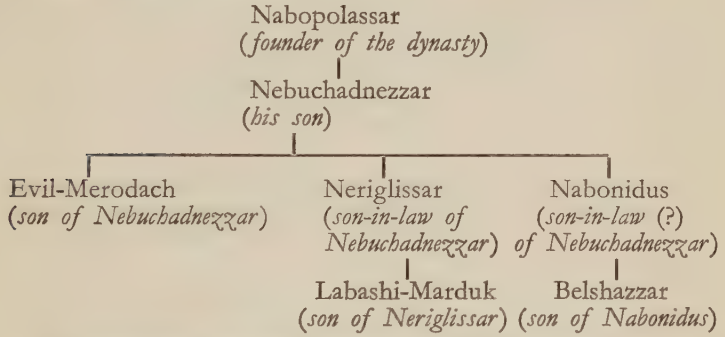
third and fourth chapters are devoted to symbolic prophecies of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Great Exile, and therefore date from the moment of our story.

[54] Ezek., xxvii, 11 ff.; xii; xxi.

[55] No sign of internal decoration has been found in the halls or smaller rooms of this immense palace; it would have been in the throne-room if anywhere, and we are definitely told that none was discovered there.

[56] Philostratos, *Life of Apollonios.*

[57] Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, p. 79, gives the dynastic table as follows:



[58] The gesture depicted on the stele of Bel-kharran-Bel-utsur, the Assyrian Captain of the Palace (see above, n. 13).

[59] Genouillac (in *Revue d'Assyr.*, xxii, No. 2, p. 74) regards Nabonidus as the son of a concubine of Nebuchadnezzar but not as Nebuchadnezzar's own son.

[60] Dougherty, *Nabonidus*, p. 27. In the 8th year of Nebuchadnezzar, Nabonidus is named as a witness in a contract, and is already styled Governor of Babylon. He ascended the throne forty-four years later.

[61] Dougherty, pp. 29 ff.

[62] Scheil, "Origines de Nériglissar, 559–556," in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 1914, p. 173. He was born of an important family, and was the son of Bel-shum-ishkun, as he tells us in his inscriptions as King. He gives his father the title of *rubu-imga*, "wise prince". Bel-shum-ishkun's name recurs in the same relationship in various contracts of the time, under Nebuchadnezzar and under Evil-Merodach. Neriglissar is mentioned under Nebuchadnezzar as a private individual in contracts Nos. 369, 411, and 419, and in No. 266 we find his scribe, who becomes his business agent under Evil-Merodach.

Taking all the contracts together, we may conclude that Neriglissar was a wealthy noble. He had properties and

servants at Tagreta and Opis and in Babylon, he owned cattle, he caused his majordomo to buy 35 *gurs* of barley, to be paid for in three months. Lastly, he had a house in the most ample sense of the word. From the letter of Anu-shar-utsur (see below, p. 347), we may infer that under Nebuchadnezzar, in 604–562, he commanded troops, and on the same footing as the King himself. He married Nebuchadnezzar's daughter, the sister of Evil-Merodach, as Berosus tells us in the text of Eusebios (Richter's ed., p. 67). Under Evil-Merodach (561–560), he takes the centre of the stage in Babylon, thanks to the incompetence of his brother-in-law. Public affairs take up all his attention, and he looks after his private interests through proxies; when harvests, houses, or lands are sold, he entrusts the business of purchase and payment to them. He had some complicity in the murder of his brother-in-law, whom he succeeded, and we may well believe the definite assertion of Berosus in the matter.

The first certain mention of Neriglissar dates from the 9th year of Nebuchadnezzar. If he was thirty years old in 595, he must have been about sixty-five when he became King. He only reigned from 559 to 556.

[63] Sayce, *Records of the Past*, 1st ser., vol. xi, p. 139. The fitting of the fleet was provided for with the 30 talents levied from the town Nineveh and the 30 levied from its suburbs. The needs of the Palace Harem were met by 20 talents also levied from the town of Nineveh. These lists date from the reign of Tiglath-pileser, about 730. I have used the figures by analogy.

[64] Dougherty, p. 31. There are 460 documents from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, which, unfortunately, give us nothing so precise as this. Of these, 138 were written in Babylon itself, the city being mentioned in the text; of the remainder, 83 are assigned to thirty-seven different cities, the chief of which are Borsippa, Erech, Larsa, Kish, and Sippar.

[65] Sayce, *loc. cit.*

[66] Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. iii, p. 205. When Nebuchadnezzar had taken enough from the revenues to provide amply for his family, the Court, the pay of his officials and officers, the equipment and pay of the army, and the building and upkeep of palaces and fortresses, he still had sufficient to form an enormous reserve in the royal treasury at Cuthah, on which he and his successors could draw.

The nine great Governors of the first class, those of Borsippa, Erech, etc., were summoned to these audiences, that they might give information to the central government about their affairs if the King wished.

[67] All this scene is derived from the letters of Hammurabi, the

great law-giver, to his minister Sin-idinnam. The whole of Babylonian civilization was based on the institutions, customs, and organization introduced by Hammurabi. Nothing had been changed by Nebuchadnezzar's time.

[68] Jean, *Les Lettres de Hammourabi.*

[69] Letter xiii, p. 131.

[70] Part of the royal domain was leased to *coloni.* The land so leased was called *egil-bilti* and the *colonus* was called *nasi-bilti* (bearer of rent). The *coloni* worked in gangs, each gang had its chief, and the position of chief was handed down from father to son. The rent was paid in corn.

A large part of the royal domain served to provide for the subsistence of the large staff of soldiers, officials, scribes, soothsayers, singers, goldsmiths, masons, etc., attached to Nebuchadnezzar's service. Most of them received the enjoyment of a small piece of land on the domain in return for their services, about 15 acres in area, the " field of nourishment ".

[71] " For the security of the Empire and to keep his subjects obedient," Diodoros wrote later, " the King made an annual levy of troops, the leaders being chosen in the several provinces. He congregated all these men outside the towns. At the end of the year he dismissed them, and enrolled others to the same number. One advantage of this system of annual conscription was that it maintained a military force in the country without there being any fear that a long stay in camp would give the leaders an experience and an authority which might tempt them to rebel or conspire against the King. The King appointed the army-commanders, the satraps, and the judges in each province, and provided for all the requirements of government."

[72] The annual tax paid by rich Babylonians for exemption from military service was called *ilku* money (*ilku* means " King's Service ").

[73] The Assyrian Kings had not troubled about the weakening of the military strength of their country because they found fresh resources in the troops of the vassal princes. More and more foreign elements were absorbed in the standing army, until after two generations the old national militia had given place to a motley horde like that of Xerxes. That alone is sufficient to explain the collapse of the Empire of the Sargonids.

[74] We do not know the numbers of the armies of the conquerors at this time. We have only one interesting figure, from the ninth century ; Shalmaneser III, in connexion with his war with Damascus, speaks of an occasion on which he called up the total forces of the country, and crossed the Euphrates with 120,000 men. In its best times, Chaldæa is estimated to have had a population of 250 to a square mile.

[75] See above, n. 13.

[76] The celebrated little obelisk of Shalmaneser, now in the British Museum, shows the envoys of Jehu, King of Israel, bearing tribute to the Assyrian King ; the details of the tribute are given in the inscription engraved on the monument.

[77] Jer., xxvii, 12–13.

[78] Ezra, ii, 59.

[79] Renan, vol. iii, p. 383.

[80] Gly, " Juifs en Babylonie, Israëlites en Assyrie ", in *Muséon* (1922), p. 155. This article compares the lot of the Israelites taken by Shalmaneser into Assyria, where they collected round Karm and did business, with that of the Jews in Babylon, who gathered at Nippur and likewise did business. Whereas those at Karm built a temple, those at Nippur did not, obedient to Deuteronomy. Over 730 deeds from Nippur, dating from the reign of Artaxerxes, have been found. They all deal with the affairs of the house of Murasu, which seems to have been a big business firm.

Not only Jews, but men of all races, Babylonians, Iranians, Aramæans, Egyptians, were actively engaged at Nippur, where they were employed in business, the sale of goods and slaves, etc.

[81] Ezek., xxxiv, *passim*.

[82] Jer., xxvii, 12.

[83] Jer., xxix, 1–14.

[84] Renan, vol. iii, p. 330.

CHAPTER FIVE

ISHTAR

THE sun was going down behind the red walls. The streets were filling with hot shadows. Up above, the temple-domes and the pointed summits of the ziggurats seemed to be alight. Colour succeeded colour in the sky very rapidly, from purple to gold, from gold to blue-green, while undecided lights appeared in the shadows which were draping the city. The lights grew more sure of themselves, they multiplied, and with them the city came to life again—a life which owed nothing to the passion for business which moved men and things all day long, but was a whirl of pleasure and excitement. On this evening of the sixteenth of the month of Ab, Babylon was holding the Feast of Ishtar,[1] the patron goddess of childbirth, war, the rebirth of nature, and, above all, the sacred orgies of love.

This festival is known to history under the name of the Sacæa.[2] The universal symbol of the great passions of men, the goddess called all mankind to the foot of her altars. The common people came flocking, in a frantic desire for fun and enjoyment;[3] the King came to officiate, impelled by the oracle which he hoped would favour his own desires; and, between common people and King, high officials, soldiers, magistrates, burgesses, all united in the same love of the goddess. In palaces and in hovels, every marriageable girl dreamed of Ishtar, for the longed-for, terrifying night had at last come round, in which they must sacrifice their virginity to the goddess,[4] and they awaited it in trepidation.

In the various quarters of the city, processions formed,[5] in which the torches lit up weird figures, some dressed in hideous masks and carnival frippery, and others in Scythian costume. In moving circles of unsteady light, filled with yells and shrill singing, the processions wound through the labyrinth of dark lanes, now approaching each other, now diverging, awakening joyful echoes and bright colours on the high blank walls, and obscene songs were intermingled with litanies imploring the protection of the goddess. Now and again the din would burst out like a rocket.

Many of the processions converged towards the Palace, where Nebuchadnezzar awaited them. They were coming to fetch the palace slave whom they would crown King of Babylon and carry about on a daïs for five days amid general drunkenness.[6] In the other great houses, other processions were choosing their lords from the slaves of the lowest condition. The curtain was rising on five days of debauch and madness. All Babylon, seized by a tremendous delirium, took on an air of fantastic burlesque. The world was turned upside down ; the city belonged to the populace and its carnival kings, while the great ones of the earth went unserved.[7] All privileges were abolished, save the privilege of having a gay time. A vague emotion filled the hearts of the lowliest, and the five days went by in impossible merrymakings, which seemed to those simple souls to belong to no ordinary measure of time and to repay them for a lifetime of unhappiness.

Nebuchadnezzar sought to increase his power by maintaining and encouraging popular traditions. By associating the royal authority with them, he would make sure that they would not turn against it. Once upon a time, the people had set Semiramis, a slave in the palace of Ninus, on the royal throne at this same festival of the Sacæa, and she had kept it for the rest of her life.[8]

This Feast of Ishtar, which had not always, it was true, been such a riotous affair, was the oldest festival and that most revered by the people. The great men of the days before the Flood had kept the fifth of the month of Ab in the honour of Ishtar, and on that day the goddess had foretold their destinies by oracles which the later history of the Babylonian people had not belied. At Sippar, King Enmeduranki, who knew the secrets of the gods and invented divination, had asked her to establish the " destinies of the King " of the land of Chaldæa.

In the town, at the heels of their mock kings, the processions rushed in pursuit of pleasure. In the heavy air, a mystical voluptuousness dominated and merged everything in a whirl of folly. Nebuchadnezzar drove out of the Palace gate on his chariot, passed through the roaring Saturnalia of Merkes,[9] and made for the Temple of Ishtar. His people was showing him its true face. Drunkenness had swept away the mask from the monstrous lust for pleasure which was the root of the Babylonian's love of gain ; in this religious festival no mystical rapture, but only the passion for material joys could have produced that expression of desire in eyes and grinning mouths. Nor had sentiment a place ; only undiluted gross sensuality, venting itself in passionate prayers like the noise of animals.

Nebuchadnezzar brought his own thoughts and plans to the feast. When the Assyrian oppressors of his race had gone to the temple at Arbela to pay homage to Ishtar, they adored the goddess of love, but still more the goddess of war, " first among the gods, the Goddess of the Fray, who brings on battles ", as Tiglath-pileser used to call her.[10] This was the Ishtar, the patron of his ambitions, the favourer of his arms, whose help Nebuchadnezzar had wished to secure when he had declared himself " him who takes care of the sanctuaries of Ishtar ". He was having excava-

tions made at Agade to find the deed of foundation of the first temple built to the glory of the Warrior Ishtar in Babylonia, and at Erech he wished " to re-establish in its old glory " the ancient cult of the goddess who was " the Shining Lady of Erech ".

The King continued on his way, heedless of the city toppling over into general licence all round him. About his chariot, songs mingled with hiccupings, and

THE WARRIOR ISHTAR BRINGING PRISONERS TO A CONQUEROR.
From J. de Morgan, *Mission scientifique en Perse*, vol. ii, p. 109.

amid drunken howls there were cries for gold, wine, women. He went on, his eyes fixed on the battlements which rose, higher and slenderer than their neighbours, at the north end of Merkes. They crowned the two tall towers of the south gate of Ekundari, " the House where the Divine Law Dwells ", the temple which he had just rebuilt in honour of Ishtar, by the side of the Sacred Way.[11]

Beyond the crowd, through the medley of noises, all

of which were invocations to her divinity, Nebuchadnezzar seemed to see her in the clouds of dust, as if she would answer his wish alone, a dim, warlike figure, standing imperiously on her chariot, drawn by seven lions, with the quiver on her shoulder, the bow in her left hand, and her right drawing a sword. How he adored her, the goddess of love who was also the Lady of Battles ![12] War and love—what else was there in life?

Round the temple, the crowd surged in expectation of some miracle. The soldiers, holding torches, could hardly drive them back. Nebuchadnezzar mounted the steps of the traditional doorway[13] and quickly crossed the vestibule and the large open court in the centre. Two white figures awaited him—the High Priest, the *enu* of Ishtar, and the High Priestess, the *entum* of Ishtar.[14] Behind them, on the left, the flickering torchlight revealed the whole staff of the temple, drawn up at the entrance to the sanctuary in a long white line. At the end of two rooms, the perspective of which was emphasized by black bands along the white walls, the goddess, a statue of pure gold, stood with arms crossed over her exaggerated breasts, as if to conceal her glorious nudity.

Nebuchadnezzar went to the gold table which stood at the feet of the statue. He humbly murmured the familiar invocation with which he was wont to stimulate his ardours:

"I pray to thee, Queen of Queens, Goddess of Goddesses,
Lady who makest my desire impetuous,
Stimulating Ishtar, who dost gather the flocks,
Goddess of men, Goddess of women, whose decision no man learns."[15]

To the right of the holy table, there were white-clad, scented groups of women who belonged to Ishtar, the *Ishtaritus* and the *kadishtus* who lived in the temple. At their head was the *Sal-Me*, the "Beloved Consort" of the goddess, who kept the *zermashitu*, the

"Virgin", at her side.[16] They reminded Nebuchadnezzar of the proverbs which from time immemorial had been impressed on Babylonian youths to preserve them from the dangers of the flesh:

"Marry not a *kharimtu*; her husbands are innumerable;
An *Ishtaritu*, who is consecrated to the Goddess;
A *zermashitu*, whose sins are many;
In thy misfortune, she will not succour thee;
She will overwhelm a house; he prospereth not who marrieth her." [17]

In the dimness of the sanctuary, they turned to the statue, boldly presenting their bare breasts as if in homage. In their white flounced skirts they were like living flowers, of which their slim, bronzed legs formed the stalks. The people had invented spells to protect themselves against their charms. Nebuchadnezzar knew that he would find among them the *kharimtu*, the "loving one", who, in the national epic of Gilgamesh, taught love and lust to Enkidu; the *shamkhatu*, the harlot, whom the god Shamash, in contempt, had covered in a dog's skin and condemned to wander in the desert; the *kizretu*, or "lady of the harem", whose business it was to minister to men and women.[18]

Behind the High Priest and his usual staff, two bodies of men were ranged along the wall of the sanctuary. One was composed [19] of fat men whose manhood had already been sacrificed to the goddess—the *assinnus*. The others were *kurgarus*, who would presently, in accordance with unalterable rites, make the same sacrifice, to live for ever afterwards the life of harlots.[20]

Nebuchadnezzar approached the altar. "What dost thou desire of me?" he asked the golden statue. "What shall I give thee? Fat oxen? Fat sheep?"

By the voice of the High Priest, Ishtar made answer:

"I eat neither fat oxen nor fat sheep.
Let them give me the beauty of women, the glory of men." [21]

ISHTAR

Relief of the time of Hammurabi, found at Sippar, now in the Constantinople Museum (No. 1361). From Scheil "Une Saison de fouilles à Sippar," in *Revue d'Assyriologie*

[*face p.* 152

Then the King offered to the goddess cakes shaped liked eight-pointed stars and phalli, the Bread of Ishtar. The officiants set down a brazier for the sacrifices before the statue, and its gold gleamed redly. Then a sacred delirium seized upon the whole howling band of *kurgarus*. They set up a frightful noise, more like screaming than singing, in a maddening rhythm to which they began to move, first gently and then faster and faster, swaying and stamping frantically. Shoulder against shoulder, they heaved up and down like a shaken chain. In sudden convulsions, they tore off their clothes, dancing still faster, like marionettes gone mad, until, one after the other, they fell down in fits,[22] very acceptable to the goddess. As the religious frenzy rose to its paroxysm, it became utterly disgusting.[23] One *kurgaru* staggered forward to the brazier and, his white face hideous with beastly cruelty, sacrificed his vigour to the goddess with one blow and fell down in his blood.[24] Others followed in their turn. It seemed to Nebuchadnezzar that the walls of the sanctuary must collapse with the din. He moved slowly to the door, haunted by the figures staggering round the brazier. The depths of his soul were stirred wildly; he was being caught by the savage frenzy which thus did honour, in darkness peopled with nightmares, to a goddess of tenderness and love.

Guided by an *ukkurtum*, whose office had once been rendered illustrious by Amashtart, Queen of Sidon, the mother of Ehsmunazar II,[25] the three bands of sacred harlots likewise left the sanctuary to perform their office.[26] Gusts of heavy, heady scent came from their light garments. Already the torches were being lighted for the great sacred prostitution in the small closed rooms in the *gagum*.[27] On a day like this, when, though already dedicated to the goddess, they were still virgins, the High Priest of Ishtar had placed a youth before them, and said: "It is he, harlot. Uncover thy bosom, unveil. Have no shame; take

his breath, that his love may be lavished on thee." [28] To-night, as in the past and always, the *shamkhatu* on whom some nobleman had cast his eye, went with her lover of an hour into the darkness of the shut-up room in the *gagum*. "When he was satisfied, he turned his face and sat at the feet of the harlot." [29] But the High Priest suddenly appeared, to remind the *shamkhatu* that she was required by other worshippers of the goddess. She rose to obey the command of Ishtar, and her lover, indignant at the sudden desertion, upbraided her furiously in the words which Gilgamesh had used to Ishtar, the great lover, which were recorded in the classical history of his country: [30]

> "Who is thy lover whom thou lovest for ever?
> Who is thy hero, who is pleasant in the future?
> Come, I shall disclose thy harlotries!
> Thou hast loved the shepherd, the herdsman,
> Thou hast loved Ishullanu, thy father's gardener!"

In a voice rendered shrill by his sacrifice to the goddess, the High Priest tartly reminded the angry man of what Shamash had said to Enkidu in similar circumstances: "Why, Enkidu, dost thou curse the harlot, the wanton, who has caused thee to eat the food of godhead?" [31] Then, as the *shamkhatu* went off obediently to other arms, the old priest added very low, speaking to himself, "And I, O harlot, shall establish thy destiny in the country which shall not end for eternity.[32] Then I shall curse thee with the great curse."

The sounds in the closed rooms died down, and from the temple, which had lately rung with the clamour of human desires, hymns and prayers now rose. The voice of Nebuchadnezzar could be heard as he officiated.[33] Before him, *Kaeme*,[34] the enormous gold head of Ishtar, stood on a second gold table. The great eyes stared at the King from the fixed, scornful face, and he could see the tongue, parting the lips in a smile of ineffable mystery.[35]

Holding a vase full of aromatic plants in his left hand, he touched the great dumb face whose secret thoughts he would know. A voice was heard in the darkness: "How bright is the vase! May Ishtar establish glory and health for thee! Thou dost make the will of Ishtar come from her lips. Ishtar, may thy mouth and thy tongue be merciful!"[36]

On the gold table, before the motionless face of the goddess, Nebuchadnezzar laid kids, flayed and bleeding, and wine in a pan, and threw aromatic plants into the incense-burner. Delicate blue smoke went up, coiling capriciously round the enigmatic countenance, before which the King laid a heavy object of lead as a votive offering, to show his trust in the goddess.

The voice of the priest went up once more in the darkness, louder this time, as if to force from the motionless mask the word of hope which should answer their unbearable anxieties about the morrow. "Ishtar will remember the good works which the man has done in the past, and also the offering which he has now made."

Nothing further broke the silence. Round the head the coils of incense twined, the only moving realities in the place. Throbbing with emotion, Nebuchadnezzar watched the tongue of the figure. It remained without movement in the rigid mask, accentuating the irony of the implacable smile. Would Ishtar not speak to her beloved son? The voice of the priest came again, imploring:[37] "If thou dost not make the will of Ishtar come from her lips, thou wilt not live. . . . And if thou dost not keep the decision of Ishtar, it will not be well with thee. Ishtar, may thy tongue and thy mouth be merciful!"

The torches set shadows dancing on the golden face, giving it the illusion of life. At length the jewelled tongue moved, first imperceptibly, then definitely. With every nerve taut, Nebuchadnezzar watched, spellbound. And as in other days, for Esarhaddon, for

Sennacherib, for Ashurbanipal, the voice of the priest rose, slow and solemn, interpreting the divine will: "Go forward to make plunder. Space is open to thee. I too shall march, even I!" [38]

Nebuchadnezzar breathed again, triumphant, and stood up. Yes! the oracle was favourable to his plans! Jerusalem was betraying him; Zedekiah, with his sneaking embassy, had only been fooling him. Nebuchadnezzar would conquer the petty Jew princelet, and the dominion of the world would be his, once he had pulled down Jerusalem stone by stone and had wiped the very name of Jehovah from the memory of man.

Wild with delight, he gave himself up to honouring the tradition which had thus crowned his desires and justified his ambitions, and the ceremony went on, according to the unchangeable forms consecrated by the sacred texts. "When in thy robe of jewels thou shinest, and comest out, Belit, Lady of the Land, Queen dwelling there,[39] the King clothes himself in sumptuous garments; the mighty Lord of Kings goes in with hydromel, divine delight, and thou comest out by the side of him, the Lord of Kings. And in the evening thou leadest him to the Temple of Pleasure of Women."

Drunk with pride, now that his glorious destiny was certain, Nebuchadnezzar mounted his chariot and drove at the head of the procession to the south side of the city. On the Sacred Way, where it was crossed by a street running down from Merkes to the canal, black figures with torches emerged from a three-storied house and held him up for a moment. A bride of the afternoon was leaving her father's house for ever, and was tearfully embracing her mother.[40] They were surrounded by fresh joyous voices. Here was none of the ecstatic, lugubrious caterwauling of the sacrifices to the goddess, but youthful jollity and high spirits. The bridal party was followed by a band

of comic musicians and a procession of slaves, carrying the furniture and boxes which constituted the young woman's trousseau. There was a last burst of noise, and they all disappeared into an asphalt-floored porch.

Nebuchadnezzar pursued his way towards al-Kulaiah.[41] In the palm-groves in whose airy blue shade the last huts of the city lay hidden, progress was hopelessly blocked. The cars—the smart ones covered with figured stuffs and the common ones with coarser materials—were besieged by a mob of rowdy youths who overwhelmed them with scandalous badinage. The marriageable girls of Babylon, noble and common, rich and poor, were all subject to the same shameful law which ordered that once in their lives they should give themselves in the Temple of Zarpanit to the first man who came and threw a lump of silver at them, with the words, "I call upon the goddess Mylitta." In the depths of the Babylonian soul, sensual and sacred were mingled in some obscure way incomprehensible to the modern mind.

The soldiers of the guard, torch in hand, acted as police. With the flat of their swords, they made a lane for the King's chariot, which drew up before the Temple of Mylitta-Zarpanit.[42] No soaring ziggurat here; temple and outbuildings formed a low, squat mass. By passing lights, slaves could be seen, still at work, touching up the flat, drab front and trying to brighten it a little with a facing of coloured bricks, which they were finishing. Nebuchadnezzar contemplated the building with pious devotion. Then he turned to the scribe who followed him, and dictated his prayer. "I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon. I founded, I built this august temple, in honour of Zarpanit, the August Queen. I caused a square sanctuary to be built of brick and bitumen. I dug the vaults of its niches under the mass of the earth. Queen of the Gods, August Mother, be propitious to me, that my

works may be accomplished with thy aid! Give fertility to families, and watch over mothers until they are delivered!" [43]

At the side-doors of the temple was a crowd of men, held back by ropes, and each in turn entered the great covered space where the girls were collected.

Nebuchadnezzar went across the inner court, under the severe porch which led to the sacred apartments, down to the heart of the temple, a rectangular underground chapel in which the white plaster and gypsum

NEO-BABYLONIAN STATUETTES.
From Contenau, *La Déesse nue babylonienne.*

coating of the walls was unrelieved by any decoration. Over the golden altar, the eye was drawn to the statue of the goddess, stiff, erect, and solitary. Her body was slim and young, with her virgin breast, and quite naked. Her delicate head was crushed by a monstrous tiara. Long earrings fell to her neck, which was encircled in a metal necklace clasped by a heavy weight; her wrists and ankles were adorned with bracelets, and her feet were shod in sandals which left her toes showing. Goddess and symbol, Zarpanit, the Courtesan of the Gods, received the expression of

the desires of men without pity and without pleasure, with the implacable, ironic smile which was never satiated.

Nebuchadnezzar, who longed with all his heart for a numerous posterity by his two wives, stood before the altar and addressed the goddess with the ritual hymn which was recited at the Feast of the New Year :

"Zarpanit, the brightest of the stars,
Zarpanit is sublime, she is very high,
Queen of Heaven and Earth. . . . My Lady is her name,
The star Dilbat (Venus), the brightest of the stars, My Lady is her name,
The star Khegalla, the star of plenty, My Lady is her name,
The star Bal-Tesa, the star of love, My Lady is her name." [44]

Zarpanit was Ishtar again, but not the Ishtar who delighted in battle. Zarpanit was Ishtar presiding over amorous sacrifices, over the sexual act itself, as the etymology shows.[45]

In the buildings adjoining the temple, behind the ropes, the girls of the aristocracy sat, with crowns of cords round their heads and their slaves behind them.[46] They accepted their fate without revolt but without shamelessness ; their apprehension was veiled in a becoming modesty and ritual gravity as the men passed before them, one by one, between the ropes, their eyes lit with a fire which was new to the girls. Among those strange, appraising men, a girl could not choose one or reject another. One of them would throw the lump of silver at her feet, as the price and the symbol of his desire, and she would have to obey. None could return to her parents until the sacrifice to Mylitta had been made, and, while they feared it, they prayed for the choice which should make women of them.

The well-born girls, whether pretty or plain, never had to remain long in the temple, for, failing men of their own condition, the men of the people found it flattering to the self-esteem to select these aristocrats for the sacrifice to Mylitta. Things were not so easy

for the unfortunates who sat opposite them, common girls, roughened and brutalized by daily toil and privation. Some of them had sat there through three or four of the yearly feasts of the goddess, poor stranded things, who saw with sad or weary eyes all the men of the kingdom filing past, and not one wanting them.[47] They were the prisoners of the goddess, and there they would stay in her temple until the deliverer came.

Dawn was about to break. The files behind the ropes were much thinned. The last cars were driving back to Babylon, taking away the fortunate ones who would now be able to marry. The idle crowd was scattering.[48] Nebuchadnezzar returned to his Palace as a luminous bar broadened in the east. The uncertain light showed Babylon very still in the coolness of the morning. The square towers, the terraces, the green domes displayed their extravagant geometry. Over walls baked and baked again by the sun, the many-coloured ziggurats stood in airy pride and solitude, as they had stood over the city for centuries, symbols of the desires and ambitions of men. Nebuchadnezzar turned from the spectacle which always intoxicated him. The heavy cedar doors closed behind him, and darkness swallowed him up.

Next day, at sunset, Nebuchadnezzar left the throne-room, after a last audience, by a small concealed passage which led, out of the range of indiscreet eyes, to the back of the principal court, where he had built his new harem.[49] It faced westwards, and the level rays of the sun spread hues of pink and mauve over its forty-four yards of flat, plain front. Labashi, the King's architect, had just completed it for Amytis and Nitocris, the two Queens, and their innumerable retinue of women.[50]

A high tower of sun-baked brick rose above a large doorway, set between two smaller ones.[51] Before entering, Nebuchadnezzar looked back, and noted with

satisfaction that Labashi had carried out his orders well. He had faithfully copied the general arrangement of the most beautiful harem ever seen, that of Sargon at Khorsabad; but, with perfect art, he had adapted its proportions to the present site, so that, though smaller than its model, the new building was happier in its æsthetic balance.[52]

Over the door, on the brick wall which the day was gilding as it took its farewell, the King read the inscription which Labashi, in accordance with his instructions, had copied from that which Sargon had caused to be written at the entrance of his harem: "May Ninib-Sandan, Lord of the High Deeds which are his delight, increase the majesty of Nebuchadnezzar, King of the World, King of Babylon, who built this building." [53]

He traversed an inner court, where fat eunuchs were sleeping, each with one eye open in his puffy face. Here the majesty of the Palace was adorned with the loveliest varieties of enamelled brickwork. On every side it clad the bare walls in the verdure of palms, the symbol of fertility. In parts, the stucco was embellished with rosettes and palmettes of gold and silver plating, which many centuries later were to evoke the admiration of Apollonios of Tyana, when he visited the city in the days of Nero.

Following the Assyrian tradition, on which Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal had educated their sons, Nebuchadnezzar had ordered that his own son Evil-Merodach, the heir to the throne, should be brought up in this harem, in the little rooms of gay enamelled brick, in the keeping of eunuchs, until he reached his eleventh year.[54]

He knew that to-day many women in those brightly-coloured rooms were hoping for his favour, and beguiling the hours of waiting by scheming, storming, and squabbling.[55] But to-day he sought none but Amytis. A frightful shrieking suddenly arose to

remind him of the dramas which went on in that passionate, unruly little world of women. A eunuch, prostrating himself, informed him that it was a nurse, who had that morning been sentenced to have her breasts cut off, in accordance with the penalty provided in Article CXCIV of the Code of Hammurabi, for she had been secretly nursing two babies at once, with the result that both were pining. The *rab-daiki*, the executioner, went by, smiling and satisfied, wiping his long dagger. Someone was sobbing in a dark corner. A woman had allowed her child to die, and, in virtue of the same article of the Code, she must die herself; to-morrow, at dawn, she would be drowned.

Nebuchadnezzar came to a stair of eleven steps, and went up it with a light heart. Enamelled bricks and festoons of gold gleamed in the perfumed twilight. The silence grew deeper. The King had a blessed sense of peace as he tore himself from the slavery to which his office and his ambition subjected him, to take refuge in that harem.[56] On the right were the apartments of his second wife, Nitocris, whom history only remembers as the mother of her who was to be the great Nitocris, the wife of Nabonidus and the mother of Belshazzar. Nebuchadnezzar went straight to the apartments of Amytis, his first wife. In the nuptial chamber,[57] the dazzling white of the stucco was emphasized by a black plinth. The brick floor was covered with thick woollen carpets, gorgeous with blue and scarlet. In the alcove was the couch, a plain wooden frame on high legs, on which the mattress and cotton coverings made a splash of red.[58]

Amytis appeared. Her long purple robe, caught over the left shoulder, revealed the lovely lines of her slender neck and her right shoulder. The narrow Medic bosom was crossed diagonally by a heavy fringe, which fell to her ankles. Its weight stretched the light material, which showed the graceful contours of the Queen and swayed with her supple walk. Her jet-

black hair was rolled in tight curls behind, held in a net and tied together by a ribbon.[59]

A new light shone in Nebuchadnezzar's eyes. Pride gave place to tenderness. He hastened to the Queen's side, thereby showing a readiness, rare in Babylonian husbands, to subordinate his ambition, even his self-will, to his love for Amytis, wanting nothing so much as to please her.

Yet Amytis did not dare to confess to him the jealousy which tortured her.[60] Would Nitocris, whom Nebuchadnezzar had installed in the harem, the booty of the victory of Pelusium and the pledge of Egyptian neutrality, take her place in the heart of her King and lord? If it was only a question of beauty, she was ready for the fight, but policy had reasons beyond the comprehension of the heart. Would she be sacrificed one of these days? Her lips were trembling to utter the vindictive words which Ashurbanipal's daughter, Princess Sherua-eterat, had once written in an access of jealousy to her rival: "You do not address the letter which you have sent me becomingly, and you do not use your title as fits your position. People might say, 'Is that the sister of Sherua-eterat, the eldest daughter of Ashur-etil-ilani, the great king, the lord of the *bit-riduti* (harem) of Ashur, the great king, the powerful sovereign, the king of these places, the King of Assyria?' You are only the daughter of the sister-in-law of the wife of Ashur-etil-ilani, the eldest son of Esarhaddon, King of Assyria and of the *bit-riduti*."[61]

Nebuchadnezzar led Amytis away. Together they crossed the principal court. Avoiding the great dark gate on which soldiers mounted guard, they turned left into a narrow passage rising between the houses of the two courts, then to the right behind the Chancelleries, and came out, miraculously, at the foot of a hill. It rose to the height of three stories above the Palace, and was covered with a marvellous forest of pines, cypresses, mastics, and cedars, bathed in warm light.[62]

Amytis looked up in timid wonder at the artificial mountain rising above the whole eastern end of the court. Only the maddest fancy, combined with the most harmonious sense of form, could have conceived that architectural audacity, that masterpiece of imitation. Her smile told Nebuchadnezzar of her gratitude. Here, in Babylon itself, he had for her sake determined to reproduce the gardens on the steep hillsides of Persis, that she might no longer miss her home, that her present might be linked to the past among these flower-beds in the sky. Here the faithful Labashi had managed to achieve a miracle of harmony, where all was green and scented. Centuries later, Diodoros of Sicily would marvel at it. An effect of natural disorder had been produced with the greatest art. Amytis recognized with emotion all the kinds of trees which had delighted her in her young days, and in their shade, by the running waters, were the flowers and fruit which she had known so well.

Hidden beneath the riot of vegetation were the fourteen underground chambers which supported it all, with their arches facing each other, reinforced by a square wall of four *plectra* to a side.[63] One row of vaults was set on another, the topmost being over fifty cubits high. The cedars and pines ran their roots deep into the hollow of the piers which supported the brick vaults.[64] From the highest platform, the summit of that astounding ziggurat of verdure, the eye suddenly surveyed the whole extent of the walls and towers and terraces of the Citadel; beyond, it saw the multitude of temples, palaces, and houses, crowded together in a jumble of cubes, domes, square towers, and terraces, stretching away on every side—Babylon, a tremendous camp, built of bricks and mud on the boundless plain. Down below, in the city, the imaginations and dreams of men turned to the gardens suspended in the sky.

The King and Queen entered the cool, scented

shade of the acacias, the trees of Media, the tamarisks. Nothing broke in upon the solitude and silence but the singing of the birds and the happy hum of bees.[65] Amytis was filled with love, and Nebuchadnezzar walked by her side in silence. This artificial forest, which brought sweetness and poetry to the ugly Citadel of Babylon, might bear witness to his love; but did it not, even more, bear witness to his pride, always burning to surpass itself? Even here he had bent nature to his sovereign will; everything gave way to him. As they climbed the path which wound through the rustling clumps of mastics, tamarisks, and acacias, he gloried in the thought that he had succeeded in doing something supremely well, which his Assyrian oppressors, ever since Sargon II at Khorsabad, had attempted to do as a relaxation from their ambitious scheming. None of them had succeeded in producing, within an area confined on every side, such a combination of poetry with disorder, of nature with art, in a play of running waters, greenery, and light. In the palaces of Sennacherib at Kuyunjik and Nineveh, which Nebuchadnezzar had given to the flames in the wars of his youth, there had been terrace gardens, built on superimposed rows of pillars; but, for lack of soil and attention, the trees and bushes had been wretched stunted things, which had generally died in the relentless sun of the valley of the Tigris.[66]

Happy to be able to go up a hill at all in flat Babylonia, Amytis gaily mounted to the top of the Hanging Gardens, and stood gazing up at the majestic cedars brought from Lebanon, rearing their colossal architecture into the great empty sky. Water gurgled and babbled in channels on every side. Beneath that paradise, in the dark underground chambers which supported the hundred feet of earth, Egyptian and Israelitish slaves, prisoners of war, turned enormous wheels day and night, wailing doleful songs. Irons clanked at their feet, and their breath came gasping,

while the water of the Euphrates slowly rose, bearing life to the Hanging Gardens.[67]

The tops of the cedars swayed in the wind.[68] Nebuchadnezzar thought with pride of his success in acclimatizing the trees which were the fairest gems of Judæa and had sheltered the loves of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. The gaze of Amytis did not stop at that high, luminous forest; beyond the battlements by which her life had been bounded for sixteen years, she scanned the blue distance. Could those dim shapes on the far horizon, beyond the immense plain, be Demavend, the mountains of her old home?

Nebuchadnezzar gave a brief order. A scribe of the library of Borsippa, who had followed at a respectful distance, came up with some little tablets.[69] Under the green roof, the evening mists rendered all forms indefinite. As the day gently declined, Amytis shivered, and drew close to the King, while the scribe, in a droning voice, recited the most beautiful love-story of Babylonia—that of the grief of Ishtar for the death of her lover Tammuz.

"Thou art my king.
Thou wast cruelly taken away, the shining sceptre was taken from thy hand.
Lift up thy hand which was beaten down.
Without Tammuz the earth ceases to be." . . .
And Ishtar groaned, "Alas, in his youth he sleeps among the flowers of the garden; he is deserted.
The hero, my Dumu-zi, among the flowers of the garden he sleeps,
Among the flowers of the garden he is abandoned.
Among the mulberry-trees he sleeps.
We are steeped in woe for his sake."[70]

The voice of the scribe died away for a moment, and all was silence and oblivion. Then, as he began again, Nebuchadnezzar drew Amytis to him, and repeated the verses in a tender whisper:

"Queen of Babylon, Queen of Heaven,
I shall renew the green things for thee.
What has been taken away, I shall bring it back for thee."[71]

Amytis no longer listened to the scribe. She told her husband of her childhood in the fair palace of Ecbatana, in the heart of the seven concentric walls of the city.[72] Frail feminine hostage as she was, she was proud to be the sweet, strong bond which united the two great kingdoms which divided the world between them. Was it not a triumph of love?

On the lofty terrace, the very silence exhaled a mysterious enchantment. They stood closer yet, finding a strange charm in standing there, mute and still, while the moon rose above the cedars into the pale sky.

Nebuchadnezzar gazed long at a small train of figures dwindling towards the horizon, the caravan which was taking Zedekiah over the great desert to Jerusalem. His eyes ranged over the illimitable undulations of the plain, now in the direction of Nineveh, which was but a heap of stones, and now towards Jerusalem, the other enemy, which still stood. He thought—he dreamed. Jerusalem—Jerusalem should be the triumph of his glorious destiny.

Night and its silence were deepening, and, as if to dispel the sense of fear which it always brings, the voice of the scribe was again intoning the old poem, the divine echo of the united hearts of the lovers. Love, through Ishtar, had conquered death;[73] the goddess had gone down into the Underworld seeking her beloved, and Tammuz had risen from it for ever, through Ishtar.

"The dead will rise again! They will breathe the incense!"

In the magic of that hour, the oft-repeated words took on a new note, and the head of Amytis sank on to Nebuchadnezzar's broad chest.

"Be thou my husband, and I shall be thy wife;
Grant me thy joy."[74]

A shiver went through the air, and the stars appeared, still barely visible and infinitely remote. It

was time to go in. The King and Queen slowly returned towards the harem. The broad disk of the moon grew brighter, shedding its startling radiance far into the dark corridors. Suddenly it threw a hard glare on the inscription over the second door, copied from the inscription at Khorsabad : [75] " Nisroch, Lord of Mysteries, who piercest the hymen, increase the family of Nebuchadnezzar, King of the World, who built the nuptial house. Make his love easy and his embrace fruitful. Dazzle the eyes of the King and stop his ears. O God who dost excite the senses, hear the voice of the bride, aid her works. May children be vouchsafed to her."

The rays of the rising sun laid bars of light on the enamelled bricks of the chamber of Amytis. The incense was still burning in the middle of the room. The royal pair awoke. The Queen's neck was hung with the magic stones, Aban-erie, the Stone of Conception, Ittamir, the Stone of Childbirth, and Aban-raame, the Stone of Love, and the King said to her: " Thou makest this house to prosper, thou purifiest it, thou closest the breaches in its walls. Wife and housekeeper, young woman, daughter of the house, thou makest their hearts to swell, O stabilizer of the city ! " [76]

Both rose, and taking hands, went and purified themselves [77] at the fountain which had lulled them with its music all night.

NOTES ON CHAPTER FIVE

[1] There are many accounts of ceremonies in honour of Ishtar, including the books of ritual of kings who acted as her officiating priests. Thureau-Dangin has restored several in his *Rituels accadiens*. See also Plessis, *Étude sur les textes concernant Istar-Astarté*, and Langdon, *Babylonian Liturgies*.

[2] Plessis (*op. cit.*, p. 253) establishes beyond dispute the identity of the Sacæa with the great feast of Ishtar in Babylon.

[3] " The ancient Chaldæan worship of Ishtar was adopted by the Persians, among whom it was mixed up with a grotesque festival taken from the Sacæ (Scythians), or, rather, imitating their manners " (Lagrange, *Les Religions sémitiques*).

" The feast of the Sacæa in Babylon lasted five days. As in Rome, the slaves became the masters, and in every house a slave dressed up as a king and bearing the title of Zoganes held brief sway. In addition, a condemned prisoner was dressed as a king and allowed to live up to the part to the extent of enjoying the royal concubines ; at the end of the feast, his fine clothes were taken from him and he was flogged and hanged " (S. Reinach, *Cultes, mythes, et religions*, p. 334).

[4] Hdt., i, 199.

[5] " It is a Bacchic orgy which lasts by day and by night. They dress themselves up as Scythians and drink and knock each other about, including the women who drink with them " (Strabo, xi, 8, 5).

[6] " The condemned man, transformed into a king, wears the King's clothes, sits on his throne, and lies with his concubines " (Dio.).

[7] Diodoros ; Ælian, *Varia Historia*, vii, 1.

[8] This is her famous and mythical epitaph, which Alexander was supposed to have discovered (Maspero, small ed., p. 345 ; Lenormant, *La Légende de Sémiramis*) : " Nature gave me a woman's body, but my deeds made me equal to the bravest of men. Before me, no Assyrian had seen the sea ; I saw four seas, which no man approaches. I made rivers flow where I wished, and I only wished them to flow where they would do good ; I made the earth fertile by watering it with my rivers. With iron I made roads through the impassible rocks ; I made roads for my chariots where even the wild beasts had not passed.

And in the midst of my labours I found time for my delights and for my loves."

"She never would be married again lawfully", says Diodoros, "in order that she might not lose the sovereignty, but she chose out the handsomest men of the army, and after loving them caused them to disappear."

[9] King, *History of Babylon.* See the details on this aristocratic quarter, pp. 82–5.

[10] Plessis, *Études*, chap. iii, pp. 88–103.

[11] Koldewey, *Excavations*, p. 288.

[12] Plessis, *Études*, pp. 97–8. Inscription of Ashur-nasir-pal III to Ishtar, which gives the whole character of the goddess.

[13] Plessis, chap. iii, p. 251.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 236 ff.

[15] Hymn to Ishtar, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 357.

[16] Plessis, *op. cit.*, pp. 237 ff.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 240.

[18] *Ibid.*, p. 241; Epic of Gilgamesh, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes.*

[19] Plessis, on the male staff of the goddess, pp. 225–36.

[20] "To the cult of Ishtar were also attached three classes of prostitutes who lived in the *gagum* under the oversight of an *ukkurtum*, as near the same temple there existed an establishment of men directed by a high priest called *ukurrum*" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 158).

[21] A sacramental phrase which to some extent explains the manners of the East. There was an idea of sacrifice behind all the beastliness of the Babylonian. Ishtar required the sacrifice of the human body. Being the goddess of love, all that she asked of the men and women who wished to serve her was the sacrifice of their strength or beauty. These practices are part of the whole life of the East.

[22] "The *kurgarus* delight in convulsions,
Striking with fire-brands and casting burning pieces"
(Plessis, *Études*, p. 231).

[23] Plessis, p. 232. This castration was religious and voluntary, and was, when all is said and done, the manifestation of an elevated sentiment, as is well brought out in Lagrange's account of the mutilation done in honour of Cybele: "The operation was the candidate's own act, and was of the nature of a token of love to the Mother, giving the extreme proof of a desire to please her, to renounce something very precious in order to belong to her and to be more like her. The goddess, who was the wife and mother of the gods, wanted only those in her service who had made themselves as much like her as possible."

Was it the duty of these men, who henceforth became as women, to devote themselves to the practices which afterwards distinguished the Galli? The Assyrian and Babylonian documents do not say. A text regarding omens says, "If a man goes with a *kurgaru*, affliction falls on him." But, while the passage implies that such things happened, it makes it plain that they should not, since they were punished with misfortune; they did not constitute a ritual act. Nevertheless, these people probably had some function similar to that of the sacred harlots, since they are occasionally mentioned together.

[24] Lucian, *De Dea Syria*; Plessis, p. 232.

[25] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 158; Plessis, pp. 236 ff.

[26] Plessis, p. 237.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] Epic of Gilgamesh, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 197 (shortened for decency's sake).

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*, p. 245 (Epic of Gilgamesh).

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 209.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 211 (Gilgamesh).

[33] Plessis, *Études*, p. 256. This was the most intimate and solemn ceremony of all, the deliverance of the oracle (from the famous tablet, "The Performance of the Rites of Great Bit-Eki, in the city of Kar-Tukulti-Ninurta").

[34] "This is the only text which mentions Kaeme and gives all these details of the consultation. It may be supposed that all consultations of the goddess were conducted in a similar manner, but of course the exhortation of the *shangu* would vary according to the person inquiring. Thus, Ishtar of Arbela was careful to deliver her highly elaborate and artistic oracles in person when the inquirer was Esarhaddon or Ashurbanipal" (Plessis, p. 259). "Fear not, Esarhaddon (?); I take care of the land. I shall make the designs of thine enemies to vanish away. I shall shed their blood according to what I have spoken on men of every speech, on them who follow leaders. Thou shalt have kingship over them" (Plessis, p. 97).

[35] There is later evidence of similar heads being used at Harran for uttering the oracles of Sin.

[36] Plessis, pp. 256 ff. So there must have been something representing the mouth and tongue of the goddess, which was used for delivering oracles in her name. The letter of Jeremiah implies that the tongues of the gods were visible and ornamented, and were made to give oracles by some trick.

[37] Plessis, p. 259.

[38] Annals of Ashurbanipal; Lenormant, *La Divination chez les Chaldéens*, p. 137.

[39] Plessis, p. 254.

[40] " In the afternoon, the two families met after weeks of discussion about the respective marriage-portions, and the father of the bride put his request to the father of the bridegroom. Then the fair bride appeared, painted and scented with precious perfumes, and the father of the bridegroom laid the palms of the two young hands one on the other, tying them with a piece of wool, and then, after calling on the gods Nabu and Marduk and King Nebuchadnezzar, declared them united. The scribe wrote on his clay tablet, ' Idina spoke to Sulai, saying, " Give thy daughter Bilitsunu in marriage to my son " ', and the witnesses marked the clay with their nails or seals. Then the bride's father caused the tables to be brought for the feast, in the course of which the whole quarter came and paid its compliments " (Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 242).

[41] " Twenty minutes north of Hillah is the ruin of al-Kulaiah, the little fortress, which is of ancient origin. The longer sides are 130 yards long and the others 100. There is an entrance on the north side. This was perhaps the temple of Zarpanit, in which, according to Herodotos, the Babylonian women used to give themselves to strangers " (Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, p. 194). There is an inscription of the temple of Mylitta, repeated in full on four complete cylinders, two of which are in Berlin and two in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. Oppert, having discovered similar fragments in the ruins of al-Kulaiah, rightly supposes that the temple of Mylitta-Zarpanit must have been there.

[42] The identity of Zarpanit. Zarpanit, the Chaldæan Venus, presides over reproduction and the pleasures of the senses. On the cylinders she is represented naked, full-face, hands on breast. Her identity with Ishtar is established by a cylinder which gives her in Ishtar's place among the five planets. We know that Ishtar is also the " Goddess of Battles, Queen of Victories, she who leads armies to battle, she who judges warlike deeds ". Also, wearing a tiara, she is " the Fortunate Goddess, who presides over happiness and gladdens men ". All the female goddesses of Asia have a two-fold character, both warlike and voluptuous, the two sides often being called by different names. Zarpanit is the Chaldæan form of the Ishtar of love. Ishtar is chiefly an Assyrian goddess (Ishtar of Arbela, Ishtar of Nineveh). Zarpanit, the wife of Bel-Marduk, is the goddess who was imported from Babylon into Samaria, and there worshipped with foul rites. As wife of Bel-Marduk, she was called Hera by the Greeks.

[43] The inscription of the temple of Mylitta (Ménant, p. 215). See above, n. 41.

[44] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*, p. 139.

[45] She had also protected the loves of the Assyrian invaders. The tablets of Ashurbanipal describe the garments of gold and precious stones which he caused to be made for Zarpanit and Marduk.

[46] Hdt., i, 199.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] According to Pallis, it must have been another temple, nearer the centre of the city, but the presence of the bricks of the other site suggests that the temple was there, as I have placed it in my description.

[49] The walls had been built by Nebuchadnezzar in the manner which had been traditional since the time of Hammurabi, viz., of unbaked brick on foundations of baked brick. The bricks, a foot square, were bonded with asphalt (Koldewey, p. 125).

[50] The harem was in what is known as the western extension of the Southern Citadel (Koldewey, p. 125).

[51] Koldewey points out that this arrangement of the entrance is unique in Babylon (p. 127). We can, however, fairly suppose it to have been just like the celebrated doors of the harem at Khorsabad, as reproduced by Place in *Ninive et l'Assyrie*.

[52] See the descriptions of the famous harem of Sargon, in Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. iii, pp. 268 ff., and the many plates in Place, *op. cit.*, e.g., pll. xxiv–xxv.

[53] Nebuchadnezzar was very anxious to have many children, as we may gather from the inscriptions, particularly that of Borsippa to Nabu: "Write the happy course of my days in the columns of the eternal table which establishes the destinies of heaven and earth, and write therein fertility in offspring."

[54] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 269; inscription of Ashurbanipal, translated by Jensen in *Keilinschriftliche Bibliothek*, vol. ii, p. 154.

[55] The emancipation of women was far advanced in Babylon. The Queen led a life very different from that of Ashurbanipal's wife, who tremblingly served her lord with wine beneath an arbour. The general licentiousness of manners had popularized polygamy while restricting the number of wives. The day of the despotic, swarming harem was gone. The site given by Nebuchadnezzar to his harem in Babylon was very small compared with the two acres of the harem at Khorsabad. It was in ancient Chaldæa that the tradition of the harem had started; the old kings of Lagash had them in 3000 B.C., as the ruins of their palaces prove. Nebuchadnezzar must have done as his fathers had done. The Bible and every historical tradition give him a harem, but the Queen, none the less, had an important position in the Palace.

[56] The excavations have revealed the special care with which this building was erected, with its walls on wide brick bases. The rooms were beautifully paved with brick, and unusual precautions were taken to guard against damp. A high bank of brick was piled against one wall, reaching almost to the moat wall of Imgur-Bel, and the wall was washed over with asphalt outside (Koldewey, pp. 125–7).

[57] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 268. See also Place, *Ninive et l'Assyrie*, pl. xxv.

[58] The only famous anecdote of the harems of Babylon which has come down to us through the centuries is that recorded by Philostratos in his life of Apollonios of Tyana (i, 25), who was there in the time of Nero. The palace of King Bardanes rang with the cries of eunuchs and women. A eunuch had been caught with one of the King's concubines, and the keepers of the women's apartment were dragging him by the hair, as was the custom in the King's service. The oldest of the eunuchs declared that he had long noticed the guilty man's love for this woman, that he had forbidden him to speak to her, to touch her hand or her neck, or to attend to her more than to the others, and that he had just surprised him *in flagranti*. Then the King said to those about him, "What punishment does this man deserve?" "What else does he deserve, but to live?" This answer surprised the King. "What?" he said. "Is he not worthy of a thousand deaths, who has sullied my couch?" "Yes," answered Apollonios, "and that is why I do not mean that he should be pardoned, but that he should be punished in the manner which he will most feel. Let him live on, sick and unable to satisfy his desires. What other torment could consume him so miserably? What hunger could so tear his vitals? He must indeed love life, O King, that he does not beg thee to shorten his days, or slay himself in the regret that he was not so fortunate as to die to-day." The King took his advice and spared the eunuch's life.

[59] For the costume of Amytis and the Babylonian women, see the Babylonian cylinders, particularly in Layard, *Culte de Mithra*, pl. xxviii, fig. 12, and pl. l, fig. 6.

[60] "The epistolary collections confirm and emphasize the great influence enjoyed in Assyrian society by certain women. Zakutu, Sennacherib's wife, played an important rôle at Court and in the state. On the death of her son, Esarhaddon, she sided with Ashurbanipal, and Na'id-Marduk . . . a vassal of Assyria, regarded her as Regent while her son was waging war in the west" (just like Nitocris, the mother of Nabonidus, at the time of the fall of Babylon) "and addressed reports to her: 'To the mother of the King, my master, thy servant, Na'id-

Marduk. Peace to the mother of the King'" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 352).

[61] Johnston, "The Epistolary Literature of the Assyrians and Babylonians," in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, xviii, pp. 125–75, and xix, pp. 42–96. It is the only letter of an Assyrian princess that we have. This unique document of the harems of the time is very suggestive, and might have come from the palace of the Louvre, Versailles, or St. Cloud. It is a tablet of thirty lines, first translated by Sayce, who regarded it as a writing-lesson.

[62] Koldewey (pp. 91 ff.), gives a detailed account of the excavation of the "Hanging Gardens". They are now called the "Vaulted Building", since nothing of them remains but the fourteen underground rooms which supported the arches on which the gardens planted by Nebuchadnezzar were carried. "Fourteen cells . . . balance each other on the two sides of a central passage. . . . In one . . . there is a well which differs from all other wells known either in Babylon or elsewhere in the ancient world." There must obviously have been a hydraulic apparatus like a chain-pump, by which slaves raised the water of the river to the gardens. Koldewey observes that these subterranean arches, which had to bear such a great weight, were of quite different construction from the external arches of Babylonian monuments. Diodoros (ii, 10), Strabo (xvi), and Quintus Curtius have all given celebrated accounts of the Hanging Gardens (Ménant, *Babylone et Chaldée*, p. 265).

[63] Berosus, quoted by Josephus in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, also mentions the Hanging Gardens: "Nebuchadnezzar made, next to the Royal City, a building resting on substructures of stone, which he raised to a great height, making them as much like natural hills as possible. He planted it all over with trees of different kinds, and so built what are called the Hanging Gardens. He built them to please his wife, who had been brought up in Media and was very fond of the sight of hilly country."

[64] Strabo, xvi (Didot's ed., p. 628). Diodoros (ii, 10) considers that there was enough soil on the stonework of each story to hold the roots of the trees (as I have supposed), and adds: "All this surface of the hill, in the shape of a sloping floor, was covered with trees which might delight the beholder by their size and their other charms." This, too, is the opinion of Quintus Curtius.

[65] Quintus Curtius says of the gardens: "It is related that the Hanging Gardens are the work of a Syrian king reigning in Babylon, done for love of his wife, who, longing for the country, urged on her husband to imitate the beauties of nature in this way" (Ménant, p. 266).

[66] See the reproduction of a hanging garden on a slab from the palace of Sennacherib at Kuyunjik, in Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art : Chaldée et Assyrie*, p. 445, and that of a relief of Sennacherib, showing a row of trees on a terrace supported by pointed arches, *ibid.*, p. 143.

[67] Koldewey, pp. 91 ff. Of these pumps, Diodoros says (ii, 10): "At the highest level, there was a building with perpendicular shafts and machines for raising water to the top. So a quantity of water was taken up from the river without it being seen from outside." Strabo says, "Men work machines which raise the water of the Euphrates into the garden."

[68] In these Hanging Gardens Alexander the Great spent his last hours, according to Arrian (vii, 25, containing the extract from the Royal Journal). He fell ill after the banquet given to him by Medios in the quarter situated east of the Euphrates. He was conveyed in a palankeen to the bank of the river, which he crossed in a boat to reach the Paradise (the Hanging Gardens). It was there that, after bathing, he rested in his room and gave orders to his officers. Some days later, he had himself carried from the Palace to the side of the pond, where he offered the prescribed sacrifices. This seems to show that this pond was a tank in the Paradise, and that there was a building for sacrifices quite close. Three days after that, having become worse, he ordered them to take him from the Paradise to the Palace. The next day, the 26th of Dæsios (May–June), he sank into coma, and died two days later. His body was embalmed, placed in a gold coffin, and sent to Egypt.

[69] Plessis, *Étude sur les textes concernant Istar-Astarté*, Hymn to Tammuz, the copy of which is of the time of Hammurabi, according to Scheil (pp. 53 ff.).

[70] P essis, p. 63.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 64.

[72] Hdt., i, 98.

[73] Descent of Ishtar into the Underworld, xiv, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 341.

[74] Epic of Gilgamesh, xiii, *ibid.*, p. 243.

[75] Continuation of the inscription of the harem at Khorsabad. See above, p. 161. I have substituted the name of Nebuchadnezzar for that of Sargon, as I did for the first part of the inscription.

[76] *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, s.v. "Babylone".

[77] "He burns perfumes and sits by them to purify himself, and his wife does the same on the other side" (Hdt., i, 198).

CHAPTER SIX

THE SACK OF JERUSALEM

In Babylon [1] the gods were pleased to communicate with pious men, and to reveal the future to them in dreams. When important affairs of the realm were at stake, the King could obtain this favour by sleeping in the holy place.[2]

Many official inscriptions tell us that the key to dreams was the key to policy. Nebuchadnezzar, realist as he was, was nevertheless a victim to the belief [3] in the occult sciences which had taken possession of the world for the last two hundred years. Records of dreams were kept in the archives of the office of foreign affairs as methodically as the events which they foretold. There Nebuchadnezzar must have placed the prism of clay on which was written the dream which led him, one night in the year 590, to destroy Jerusalem.[4] To interpret this dream, which affected the whole policy of Babylon, he would not have recourse to the priestess of the oracle of Borsippa, nor even to the *sabrus*, the seers to whom the gods accorded the privilege of prophetic dreams. He would have no intermediary between himself and Marduk, and it was to the god's own tomb,[5] under the great gaudy mass of the Ziggurat of Babylon, that he went.

The gate of the outer wall of the temple was lit by torches. White figures led Nebuchadnezzar through the labyrinth of chapels winding among the foundations of the pyramid. The stifling darkness teemed with silent priests. All the soothsayers [6] had been ordered to hold themselves ready. An *abkallu* was

already leaning over a vase full of water, into which he had cast a drop of oil; its shape would give information about the future. Opposite him, a *baru* was inspecting the inwards of an ass [7] and smiling; they were bluish, and twisted to the left, and contained no fissure [8]—an excellent omen.

Nebuchadnezzar did not even see them. He had but one wish—to lie by the golden coffin of his god, and to receive from him the signal favour of a dream which would encourage his plans of conquest.[9] It had been by a dream that Ashur, the god of Nineveh, had intimated to Gyges, King of Lydia, that he must submit to Ashurbanipal.[10] By a dream, too, the god Sin had warned Shamash-shum-ukin, the Governor of Babylon, of the miserable end awaiting his rebellion.[11] By a dream, lastly, Ishtar of Arbela had shown Ashurbanipal the right moment to attack Teumman, King of Elam, and the Assyrian army had won a glorious victory.[12] On the narrow bed set at the foot of the golden coffin, Nebuchadnezzar tried to go to sleep. Presently the one thought of the conquest of Jerusalem drove all others from his mind. Round that thought all his desires crystallized, and in the darkness of the sanctuary the dream took shape. Marduk, standing on his sacred dragon,[13] came as Ishtar had come to Ashurbanipal, to encourage him. "Go forward to make plunder. Space is open to thee. I too shall march, even I!" [14]

Nebuchadnezzar woke with a start. He went out on to the terrace, already bathed in the pale light of dawn. The sun suddenly appeared, and the city lay spread out in a red glow. At the door of the sanctuary, the *sha-ilu*, the King's seer, stood, a black figure against the gypsum wall; in his hands he held the tablets of the treatise in fourteen chapters on terrestrial omens, with the aid of which he would interpret his master's dream. Nebuchadnezzar returned with him to the Palace. There an Israelite was waiting for him.

The prophet Ezekiel, in his little house by the Chebar,[15] had also had a dream, which he had related to his fellow-countrymen as follows: "The word of the Lord came unto me, saying: A sword, a sword is sharpened, and also furbished. It is sharpened to make a sore slaughter. Cry and howl, son of man; for it shall be upon my people, it shall be upon all the princes of Israel! Let the sword be doubled the third time, the sword of the slain; it is the sword of the great men that are slain." [16] Nebuchadnezzar shook with excitement. The hour had indeed come; Marduk and Jehovah were on his side.

Next day, by the caravan-route along the Euphrates, a whole world set itself in motion behind the conqueror.[17]

Having come to Tadmor (Palmyra), Nebuchadnezzar hesitated for a moment. Of the three enemies defying him, which should he attack first? Tyre, the Egyptians, or Judah? At that parting of the way, he appealed to the omens once again; "he shook the arrows to and fro, he consulted the Teraphim, he looked in the liver." [18] Might Jehovah not have been deceiving him, in advising him through the voice of Ezekiel to chastise his own people? But arrows, Teraphim, and liver confirmed the oracle of Marduk and the prophecy of Ezekiel.

So, having detached an army against Tyre, he led the mass of his troops against Jerusalem, and behind them he established himself with strong reserves at Riblah on the Orontes. Before the Babylonian hordes went the prophecies of Ezekiel, letting loose a wind of treason and defeat on Jerusalem. "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end, remove the diadem, and take off the crown. Exalt that which is low, and abase that which is high. I will overturn, overturn, overturn Jerusalem, and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is." [19]

The shadow of the ramparts of Jerusalem [20] was spreading over the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as the sun went down with the same succession of colours as every day—blue, mauve, violet. Walls and palaces rose against the sky, a confused mass enveloped in a haze of smoke. Over the city and over the plain the darkness spread a boundless desolation and terrors without form or name. It dropped from a low sky, full of cloud. Opposite the north wall, the only side on which the city was vulnerable, the gaudy tents of the Chaldæan camp rose in tiers, surrounded by a drystone wall flanked with towers.[21]

A terrible concert of groans, howls, and lamentations went up towards the city and the dark sky. They came from a dreadful human forest—the line of Israelitish prisoners, dying impaled on stakes opposite the ramparts.[22] They had been there two or three days, the tragic wreckage of desperate sorties, and flocks of crows wheeled about them, drowning their groans with harsh croaking. Little by little, the bodies collapsed in attitudes of abandonment. They were too far off for an arrow from the walls to put them out of their pain and so end a spectacle which was intended to break the spirit of the defenders and to encourage treachery in their ranks.

At the six gates of the city the guards had been doubled, but desertions became more numerous every day.[23] Passions were at their height.[24] The crowd disputed at the street-corners day and night, and their discussions were always accompanied by the steady hammering of the Chaldæan battering-rams. Zedekiah and his officers wanted to continue the war to the very end. Jeremiah and the prophets counselled surrender, and preached the uselessness of a resistance by which the people alone would suffer and the kingship, so displeasing to Jehovah, alone would benefit.[25] But was it not madness to suppose that Jehovah would allow the defeat of his people, the destruction of his

Temple, the victory of Nebuchadnezzar, who served Bel-Marduk? No, Jehovah would save his people.[26] So the days, since the tenth month of the ninth year of Zedekiah, King of Judah, about eighteen months in all, had gone by in expectation of a miracle. Internal disorders, famine, and desertions had brought Jerusalem to the brink of the inevitable collapse.

Zedekiah,[27] in his desperation, overcame his repugnance; he sent to Jeremiah, choosing as his envoys Jehucal, son of Shelemiah, and Zephaniah, son of Maaseiah. At the foot of the walls, the prophet was yelling his imprecations, surrounded by a throng of civilians whom privation had made ready to abandon everything and soldiers whose courage had been destroyed by defeat.[28] The bodies, lying in a last convulsive posture of defence, the houses knocked down by the Chaldæan catapults, the many fires, the flow of boiling oil—everything served him to justify the wrath of Jehovah against the criminal king who still refused to hear his will, of which he, Jeremiah, was the faithful interpreter. The two envoys begged him to intercede with Jehovah, that Jerusalem and its Temple might be spared the shame of a sacrilegious profanation. "Inquire, I pray thee, of the Lord for us, if so be that he will deal with us according to all his wondrous works." The answer was implacable: "This city shall be given into the hand of the King of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire."

In distant Babylon the prophecies of Ezekiel, which were reported by a man who had come through the Chaldæan lines, echoed those of Jeremiah. "Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul loveth; and your sons and your daughters shall fall by the sword."[29]

In his camp at Riblah, Nebuchadnezzar was growing impatient. Jerusalem and Tyre still held out! Yet

how could there be any doubt of a triumph which was promised by the oracles of his own god, Marduk, and the prophecies of Jehovah, the god of his enemies? Did his merits not justify his ambition? To convince the gods and to convince himself, he caused to be engraved in a rocky pass, not far from the Orontes,[30] by the side of the great road leading from Mesopotamia to north-western Asia, a great inscription, eighteen feet long, in ten crowded columns, recording, above his own image, the entire excellence of his conduct.[31]

The ineffectiveness of his armies against a city which was already half-destroyed was all the more exasperating because couriers were coming from Babylon with reports of the prophecies of Ezekiel about the conquests which were in store for him. "Behold, I will give the land of Egypt unto Nebuchadnezzar,[32] King of Babylon, and he shall take her spoil! Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will bring the North upon Tyre, even Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, King of Kings!" [33] But oracles and prophecies had shown no sign of fulfilling themselves for months and months. Well, then, they must be forced to fulfil themselves.

In Jerusalem things were desperate.[34] All the cities of Judah, except Lachish and Azekah, had fallen to the enemy; the country of Benjamin was a mass of ruins among rivers of blood.[35] In Jerusalem itself, an island battered by a ravaging sea, food was dwindling, and every minute brought a skirmish or an alarm. Walls fell in whole stretches, and towers burned. Hope itself was dead in the hearts of the Israelites; the distress was only made tolerable to the more hardened by the thought that it might become worse.

Zedekiah still held out. But in the evenings men would steal into the gardens of the Palace, the slaves not daring to resist them, and at the foot of the terraces they would wait for the King's figure to appear, when they would shout the vilest insults at him, like dogs baying for death.[36]

By day, multitudes would gather on the steps of the Temple, sometimes shaken by great waves of fear or anger. The shrill howling of the women would mingle with the gruff cries of the men, and the voices would multiply, swell, and become one immense uproar, reaching to the furthest, narrowest by-ways. To galvanize their failing courage into life, to conquer their despair, made up of accumulated hatred and hopes betrayed, Zedekiah had no aid on which he could count save that of the men of Jehovah, his own fiercest enemies.

To these men, who stood in their rags at the street-corners, inveighing against the King and the military party, and foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, Zedekiah decided, after conferring with the nobles, to make concessions. He would bring into force the new Law [37] which Jeremiah had promulgated in the time of King Josiah.[38] In particular, he ordered the emancipation of slaves.[39] Jeremiah, with his disciples and all the many priests of the Temple, would be grateful to him for this gesture. They would sound the trumpets to exhort the troops [40] and people to hold out, in the hope of some decisive, extraordinary event in which nobody dared to believe, but which might be born of a popular enthusiasm, a recovered faith.

So one morning, Zedekiah, with lowered head, slowly descended the private stair from his palace to the Temple. He was followed by his ministers, his officers, and his favourites, in a white-clad procession, stepping to the high-pitched clash of cymbals and the deeper note of drums. A silent throng flowed over the space before the Temple and in the galleries and courts.[41] It filled the neighbouring streets and crowded on the tops of the houses. The thin faces, drawn with privation, were all turned to the Temple as to the eternal soul of the city. So long as it still stood, would not hope endure? Without that blessed Temple, could there be fulfilment of Jehovah's pro-

mise that the Jewish people would rule the world? Only here, before the Holy of Holies, could hope be reborn, brought to life by the prayers which, for centuries, had found in that place the sweet illusion of a wealth which regarded not the affliction of the body, of a life which cared not for death.

Suddenly the song of the *anawim* went up, full of a faith which was touching and sublime, after so many misfortunes, dispersions, and exiles:

"Give unto the King thy judgements, O God.
Let him judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgement.
May they fear him as long as the sun and moon endure." [42]

In the holy court, by the brazen altar, opposite a huge basin, a white bull was held, ready for sacrifice. Between the two bronze pillars flanking the great door of cypress-wood, which shone in the rising sun, Zedekiah entered the sanctuary. Before him went the High Priest, clad in white linen. It was dark in the *hekal* (cella) [43]; the little barred windows admitted only a parsimonious light which just revealed the dilapidated condition of the wainscoting, worn to a man's height by the passage of the devout.[44] The ten golden seven-branched candlesticks shone softly, winking, and touched the cedar and olive woodwork with gold.

The King [45] lifted the thick velvet curtain which hung before the holy chamber, and took his stand before the altar of cedar-wood cased in gold. A cloud of incense went up, rolling in spirals in the diffused, tremulous light. On the golden table, the show-bread had a metallic lustre. With a hieratic gesture, the High Priest slid back a shimmering curtain, slung from gold cords and heavy with embroidery and precious stones. A door appeared, its panels of olive-wood adorned with intertwining palms and lotuses, amid which the Cherubim [46] spread their golden wings, the door of the Holy of Holies, the *Debir*.[47]

There, in the darkness and the mystery, dwelt Jehovah. The King shivered, vaguely helpless in the presence of that tabernacle, so empty of all human meaning. How could he ask for the refuge of refuges, the unreal, the impossible, from that symbol of the Holy Ark? He could dimly see it, under the two enormous Cherubim of gilded wood, sixteen feet high, their outer wings rising in a stately sweep towards the ceiling and their inner wings curved more gently over the ancient coffer to which,[48] since the days of Moses, kings and queens had come to kneel in gratitude or remorse.

Between those soulless, almost bodiless wings, Jehovah dwelt, invisible and present, the deep, ineffable hope without whose aid Israel would to-morrow be wiped out. Zedekiah bowed his head, wishing to pray. In that hour of inevitable destruction, to pray would be to seize hold of something lasting, perhaps eternal. But how could he give over his destiny and that of his country to that inexplicable god, that unjust god who abandoned the kings of his people, be they as devout as Josiah,[49] as young as Jehoiachin, as brave as himself? Yet it was to save the kingdom of Judah, God's own kingdom, and his people, that he was resisting the worshippers of Marduk at the cost of so much suffering.

Perhaps there was too much pride in the bargain which he proposed to Jehovah: the adhesion of his heart and soul in return for the granting of his prayer, a miracle according to his wish. The prophets taught that the humility of men was pleasing to the Almighty. But when one was a king, when one was the Lord's Anointed, should one then submit to the injunctions of the prophets and humiliate the whole people? No, Jehovah could not desire that—a worship made of resignation, and also of lack of understanding. What kingdom could he build up with the dust of every earthly joy, having abdicated all temporal power? To

serve Jehovah, would he have to abase himself to the level of a slave?

Before the gate of the Temple, jostling the guards, an old man had come out of the crowd. In the rags which enhanced his ugliness and decrepitude, he had knelt down on the cold pavement, with hands joined and eyes wide open. On the poor face, already stamped with the impress of death, the mark of years of privation and suffering was fading away, giving place to an expression of trust and joy; down the hollow cheeks, Zedekiah saw tears rolling which he would gladly have shed himself. In a wave of indescribable distress, he longed to feel, in the depths of his heart, the sweet illusion of trust, when he implored Jehovah to preserve him, the King of the people of Israel, from the horrors with which Jeremiah threatened him.[50]

Trembling, he presented the bull before the Temple, and laid his hands on it. The priests cut its throat on the holy table; the Levites gathered up the blood with big bronze fans and sprinkled it all round, that the sacrifice might be profitable to all the city and people. The slow, solemn chant of the psalms again went up with the incense above the sacrifice:

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble; the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;
Remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice." [51]

The priests divided the reeking carcass in two, and made a path, streaming with blood, between the head and the legs.[52] The wealthy nobles of Zedekiah's retinue walked through one by one, and undertook to free their slaves, in accordance with the new Law.

That same evening, while the happy slaves were filling Jerusalem with their frantic joy, news spread that the army of Pharaoh Apries was approaching.[53] An immense hope surged up, and all miseries were forgotten. Nebuchadnezzar would raise the blockade; deliverance was certain! The shoutings

of the multitude merged in one harsh, deep roar, which rose to the Palace, so that it seemed to Zedekiah that the walls vibrated from top to base.[54] The wealthy nobles at once regretted their generosity. What use was it, now that Jehovah had decided to save his capital? In the streets, a regular man-hunt set up, every one recapturing his slaves. Was Jehovah not satisfied with the beautiful ceremony of the morning, without further sacrifice?[55]

Vain hopes, alas! Day had hardly broken when despair returned. The voice of Jeremiah was thundering at the cross-roads, and the Chaldæan army resumed its cruel grip of the city.[56] Nebuchadnezzar had decided to come and conduct the siege in person. His ambition had now chosen its victim, and he desired more fiercely than ever to have that Jerusalem which claimed to give birth to the lord of the world. He already delighted to picture himself entering the Temple, and, in the face of a dismayed Jehovah, asserting his might as the sole ruling force.

His own angry determination was egged on by the hate and greed of others. Nergalorosor, the aged Chief of the Magicians, also had his dreams of destroying the Temple of Jehovah, the rival of Marduk whose servant he was. Sarsechim, the Chief of the Eunuchs, wanted Zedekiah's young *sarim*, of whose effeminate beauty he had been told, for the adornment of the Babylonian court. Nergal-sharezer, the Keeper of the Treasure, calculated the riches of Judah, from which he hoped to make a profit himself.[57]

From the camp at Riblah, Nebuchadnezzar's army, a whole motley people, went down across Galilee. The earth shook under its multitudinous feet. It was like a hurricane, blown by one masterful passion, one sovereign will, and Nebuchadnezzar went before, led on by his pride. Standing in his chariot, he thought of the glory of the Assyrian conquerors, Sennacherib and Sargon, who had taken the same road to Samaria,[58]

the capital of the kingdom of Israel, which they had destroyed, and to Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah, which they had enslaved.

So he seemed almost familiar with the road made by nature between Lebanon and Antilebanon.[59] On his left he passed the kingdom of Damascus, dominated by the snowy summit of Hermon, once a powerful state, but now desolate, a vast wilderness of grey stones. Hardly deigning to notice the dismantled ruins of the fortress of Jeroboam, where the Calf of Gold had reigned, the army descended the Jordan, whose clear waters rippled among screens of papyrus, poplars, and aspens. There were buffalo-haunted swamps, which made progress slow, and then suddenly, in a wide, empty, silent plain, which wore the calm of a peaceful death, the blue, mysterious water of a mountain lake appeared. It was the Sea of Chinnereth, the Lake of Tiberias, the Sea of Galilee.[60] Its still waters reflected the pretty little white towns of Capernaum, Bethsaida, Magdala, framed in smiling vegetation. While the soldiers satisfied their lust for blood and debauchery, Nebuchadnezzar walked by the sunny shore, alone with his dreams of survival and glory.

In that clear air did he see, rising above the still water, a vision of things which were to happen in this place, not so long hence? Did he see, among the reeds and the rhododendrons, the figure of a young Nazarene who, unarmed, without any power but that of his humility and his divine hope, ignorant of philosophy, destitute of wealth, heedless of the cosmic forces which ruled the world and of the material forces which derived from them, would lead whole nations after him? Did the breeze already hold, awaiting utterance, the words of redemption and love which were to be spoken five centuries later, and would conquer the world when the glory of Babylon was dust and ashes? "Love one another." "My kingdom is not of this world."

Jerusalem was waiting. Nebuchadnezzar resumed his advance, urged on by his dream, which would not let him linger amid the sweetness of that calm and pleasant country. His dream was still leading him on when he found himself before the grand height of Mount Tabor, of which Jeremiah had said to the people of Jerusalem, "Surely like Tabor among the mountains, so shall Nebuchadnezzar come."

On the slopes of Tabor there were tents, set up in three or four rows. Beasts browsed around. An Israelite deserter informed Nebuchadnezzar that this was one of the nomadic tribes, rich in cattle, which still lived as they had done in the earliest ages of the world.[61] They lived the morality which Jeremiah preached, in their attachment to the patriarchal life which in their eyes was the foundation of all virtue and the only strength of Israel. "In the ideal partition which he made of the goods of the earth, Jehovah had not foreseen that there would be rich and poor"[62]; cities and their luxury, wars and conquests were ephemeral things, and nothing endured which did not come from the heart, from the love of Jehovah, who loved simple, unassuming lives. His kingdom was not on this earth, and that was why it would be eternal.

In the evening peace, heedless of the Chaldæan troops pouring into the plain, an elder stood at a small altar in the midst of the tents, offering a lamb as a sacrifice to Jehovah. Round him men and women were standing. Great fires were kindled, which lit up the dark faces with the white teeth and the majestic figures draped in long, rough blankets. Smoke went curling up into the pure air, while the peaceful aspirations of those simple men were expressed in a slow, grave chant:

"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is just, and having salvation;
And he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea."[63]

A little way off, old men with fine white locks sat gravely on the wall of a well. Before them a young widow was accusing her brother-in-law of not marrying her, as the law required, and she spat in the recalcitrant's face to indicate her contempt. Smiles appeared in the white beards, excusing her youthful indignation, which should receive satisfaction according to the laws of their ancestors.[64]

Families were taking their ease. Women were nursing babies.[65] A father was thrashing his son. "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul." Above the tents, on the mountain-side, were vines, clinging with their knotted stalks to pillars of dried mud, and gardens and orchards rose in terraces. Dark against the limpid twilight, couples sat on the walls of grey stones bound with mud, and dreamed in silence as they gazed into the distance, which was fading as the light failed. There were handsome youths, whose garments of goat-skin allowed their muscles free play, and lovely dark girls draped in red stuffs, their black eyes shining from their golden faces.

> "How fair and how pleasant art thou, O love, for delights! This thy stature is like to a palm-tree, and thy breasts to clusters of grapes,"

the young men murmured, and their heads reeled at the tender response:

> "I am my beloved's.
> Come, my beloved, let us get up early to the vineyards; let us see if the vine flourish, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. There will I give thee my loves."

Night fell, and passion rose in the heart.

> "Set me as a seal upon thine heart; for love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame."[66]

In the magic of the evening, all forms were obscured,

and everything was silent—the tender voices and the lowing of the beasts. In the brooding peace, a silent worship went up from the encampment to the stars, as it gradually fell asleep.

At daybreak, all that was left of the camp was a heap of black ashes on the rosy mountain-side, the tent-cloths fluttering in rags, and the barley, straw, and fine grapes strewn about among the bodies of slaughtered men and cattle, over which Chaldæan soldiers staggered drunkenly. Frantic women clung to dead bodies, and the cry of terror did not cease. Weeping was answered by the howling of the dogs of the tribe, the screams of mutilated children, and, further away, in the plain, the wailing of the gentle sweethearts, the fair maidens of Israel, as the Chaldæan bore them off for the satisfaction of his own lusts or the needs of the service.

The army had not even halted. The enormous human mass rolled onwards over the plain. Nebuchadnezzar drove his chariot along the serried ranks; he was to be seen in front, in the rear, on the right and left, urging them on as a sheep-dog urges a flock.

So they came down into the Plain of Jezreel, all golden with the ripe wheat. Far away, on the right, above the blushing vineyards, one of which had been Naboth's, coveted by Jezebel,[67] Mount Gilboa reared a crown of dark forests, on which neither dew nor rain ever fell, "for there the shield of the mighty of Israel was vilely cast away."[68] Nebuchadnezzar turned his eyes from its green height to look with pride at his army. Israel could not resist him, for here it had already been defeated by the little Philistine people. In the shadow of the mountain he seemed to see the ghost of Saul, who had pierced his body with his spear in this place, to escape the humiliation of defeat. Little kingdoms, little battles, little peoples, all of them!

The army slowly advanced, and the country was destroyed, pillaged, burned. Of Samaria, the first capital of Israel, nothing remained but miserable ruins on a stony, fire-blackened hill. What was left of the beautiful ivory palace of King Ahab? Nebuchadnezzar went on, and there were more ruins—Bethel, Shechem—always ruins, looking down from little dead hills on to wide tracts from which all life had fled.

Suddenly, queer shapes could be seen, far ahead—tall, angular things, which moved jerkily. They were the siege-engines invented by the Chaldæan engineers. Beyond their formidable array was—Jerusalem! Nebuchadnezzar drew up his horses. Trembling, he stared at the little Temple, which could be seen on its esplanade above the walls. It seemed to him that a great light had risen on the horizon. His face lit up with a smile of ecstasy—Jerusalem!

From their walls, the Israelites saw with terror the great army of Nebuchadnezzar. There were yet more of the monstrous engines, borne along by the human mass. They jolted and staggered as they were hauled along by their gangs. Some were huge, complicated structures of beams, rigging, and joints, mounted on limbers, protected with armour, and crowned with turrets. Others were lighter and more mobile. All swung their beams forward and back with the same great sweep, shaking doors and damaging walls.

Anxiety and terror were at their height in the city. The streets were piled with ruins and bodies; hungry masses rushed about aimlessly, screaming; and over the Temple the fires stretched a purple pall. Jeremiah's fury redoubled. He went among the wounded and the starving, where they lay pell-mell amidst filth and corpses, and cried with fierce joy, "The Chaldæans shall come again, and fight against this city, and take it." The fury of the people was now turning against him, as if all the disasters were the payment for his insolent prophecies.

One evening, at the Gate of Benjamin, the nearest to the Babylonian camp, when the prophet wished to pass through to visit his land at Anathoth, Irijah, the captain of the guard, arrested him, being persuaded that he had treasonable intercourse with the enemy. "Thou fallest away to the Chaldæans," he cried, and he led him to the *sarim* who were in permanent session in the Palace. Brought face to face with the supporters of the party which he abhorred, the old man remained as uncompromising as ever. He was beaten with rods and shut up in the house of Jonathan the scribe, which had been converted into a prison,[69] where he stoically resigned himself to endure the vengeance of pent-up hate and betrayed hopes.

"Let this man be put to death; for he weakeneth the hands of the men of war!" cried the ministers and officers.[70]

Sitting on his throne, Zedekiah stretched forward his pale face. "Is there any word from the Lord?"

"There is!" was Jeremiah's answer; "for, said he, thou shalt be delivered into the hand of the King of Babylon. What have I offended against thee? Where are now your prophets which prophesied unto you, saying, 'The King of Babylon shall not come against you'?"

Shephatiah, son of Mattan, Gedaliah, son of Pashur, and Jucal, son of Shelemiah, dashed forward, sword in hand, to silence the railer for good. With a gesture of fear, Zedekiah stopped them.

The prophet spoke again, but in a louder, harsher, more threatening voice than ever: "He that remaineth in this city shall die by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldæans shall have his life for a prey, and shall live."[71]

All were silent, all turned to the King, as if to ask for sentence of death. The King muttered brokenly, "Behold, he is in your hand."[72]

Then, amid the acclamations of the frenzied people, Jeremiah was taken by torch-light down to the cistern of Malchiah, the son of Hammelech. His long lean body sank in mud to the waist; hoots, spittle, and insults followed him into the warm, fetid darkness.[73] But, lifting his head, he saw in the sky a great wavering light, which gradually illumined the whole night. He guessed that the city-gates were on fire, and that the final assault was coming. From the depths of the cistern, now that all was consummated, the voice rose, gentler and calmer: "Concerning the houses of this city, and concerning the houses of the Kings of Judah, which are broken down to make a defence against the war-engines and against the sword, behold, I will bring this city health and cure, and it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and an honour before all the nations of the earth."[74]

He now heard a frightful crash and shouts of victory; the rams had demolished a portion of the wall. Women fled shrieking, and the wind brought to the cistern the smell of blood and boiling pitch and the muffled noise of slaughter. A huge block of stone fell on the King's Palace. Jeremiah raised a song of gladness: "Behold, the days come, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land."[75]

His prophetic joy seemed to come as an answer to the agitation of the Levites, the priests, the *anawim*, and the refugees who day and night supplicated Jehovah in the Temple:

"How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? For ever? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
Consider and hear me, O Lord my God. Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
Lest mine enemy say, 'I have prevailed against him.'"[76]

King Zedekiah, with fear, irresolution, and grief written on his face, leaned over the edge of the cistern. He wished to consult the man of God once again. But even before he ventured to speak, the voice of Jeremiah came up: "If thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the King of Babylon's princes, then thy soul shall live, and this city shall not be burned with fire; and thou shalt live, and thy house. But if thou wilt not go forth, then shall this city be given into the hand of the Chaldæans, and they shall burn it with fire, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." [77]

A long shudder shook Zedekiah. He was afraid, and he leaned further forward, trying to see the rapt face of the prophet in the darkness. He would have been glad to confide all his trouble to him, to relieve himself of the heavy load of responsibilities which were heaped upon him. Could not Jehovah bring to his people, now that it was in the depths of misery, the hope which fortifies the soul and consoles the heart? Must they drink the cup to the dregs? But all that the King could do was to confess his own fears, in a very low voice. "I am afraid of the Jews that are gone over to the Chaldæans, lest they deliver me into their hand, and they mock me." [78] "Obey the voice of the Lord," was the answer. "So it shall be well unto thee, and thy soul shall live. But if thou refuse to go forth, they shall bring out all thy wives and thy children to the Chaldæans, and thou shalt not escape out of their hand." [79]

Zedekiah fled in panic, pursued by the unrelenting voice. Having returned to the throne-room, where the great Council was in permanent session, he dared not demand either the death of the traitor or the liberation of the Lord's mouthpiece. He tremblingly ordered that Jeremiah should be kept in the cistern, and "that they should give him daily a piece of bread out of the Bakers' Street, until all the bread in the city were spent." [80]

On the ninth day of the fourth month of the year 587, the eleventh year of the reign of Zedekiah, on a moonless night, the last and largest of the Chaldæan war-engines moved forward without sound. With slow oscillations, solid shadows in the fluid shadow of the night, they advanced against the walls,[81] hauled by clusters of men, panting at the cables. To set them in motion was hard work, for the beams were enormous, and their metal tips were very heavy. But they swayed less and less, and the men moved faster. Suddenly Jerusalem shook under a terrific impact. With monotonous, unwearying precision the great ram struck the wall, and little by little the top began to sway, and stones were loosened and fell with a dull sound on to the bodies with which the moat was heaped. Then whole pieces of wall came away, raising a dust lit by a ruddy light.

In the throne-room, Zedekiah was holding a last council. What was the use of fighting? All was over. Jehovah was wreaking his vengeance, and it was to be a thorough vengeance, since he delighted in the ruin of his people. Now the predictions of Jeremiah would be fulfilled. "Lord, where is thy justice?" cried the King in despair. The will of Jehovah and his designs remained inscrutable, in the midst of the unfathomable mystery of causes and ends, in the infinity of time and space.

Cries of anguish and screams of fear rose from every part of Jerusalem, where the houses were now but the blackened tiers of a ruined amphitheatre. A crash, more frightful than any that had gone before; a breach had been made in the north wall. A shout went up from all the Chaldæan host, and in the yawning gap in the walls a forest of spears, pikes, and swords showed bristling.[82]

At the entrance to the Holy of Holies, the High Priest lay with his forehead to the ground. The Temple was full to bursting; the galleries outside

seethed with people, and inside the building the Levites and *anawim*, in a tightly packed mass, lifted their eyes and their arms in supplication to heaven. Jehovah could not permit the foul butchery of his children.

> "Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me.
> I cry unto the Lord with my voice.
> Arise, O Lord! Save me, O my God!" [83]

Infinite fear weighed down upon the praying multitude; the yells of the conquerors shook them and scattered them in uncontrollable panic. Chaldæan bowmen poured down from the walls into the lower quarters; they entered houses, ripping up children and old men and violating women and boys. The city resounded with the noise of pain and fury, while the Chaldæans gave themselves up to lust and carnage. They even fell on the wounded, cutting off their hands and feet and then flaying them alive. Before long the city was nothing but a mass of corpses and ruins under the dark sky, in which smoke rolled in thick clouds and crows with reddened beaks flew screaming.

In the throne-room of the Palace, overturned seats and fallen torches, still burning on the ground, remained to tell of the hurried flight of the King and his councillors. To the raucous voices of the victors, only one Jewish voice was added, that which came from the cistern at the end of the court.[84]

Zedekiah, with a few faithful soldiers, went out by the gate between the two walls opposite the King's garden; close by, the sleeping waters of the Pool of Siloah gleamed greyly. Near the gate some Chaldæan spearmen and archers slept, overcome by weariness and wine. The King and his little following clambered over the ruins and reached the country; then they galloped wildly towards Rabbath of the Ammonites, where perhaps they would find succour. The noises of the city were already falling behind, the

shouts were dying away, and quiet was returning ; but fear still reigned in Zedekiah's heart. On the yellow sand before him he saw a great shadow spread—Jeremiah again ! Were the prophecies of the *nabi* not yet fulfilled to the uttermost ? The air drummed in his ears, and it seemed that the harsh voice was still speaking to him, of torture, of death. He urged on his horse, and beyond Jordan the high hills of Ammon appeared like the visions of a mirage ; then the plain of Jericho.[85] But behind them was the gallop of Chaldæan horsemen, coming nearer. There was a fight, short but merciless. Soon the little body was reduced to fifty, then to ten ; Zedekiah was suddenly tied behind at the wrists and knees ; he fell on his back, and looked up to the sky where Jehovah dwelt. They bound him to a horse, and took him back to the city. In the distance, he saw it still flaming ; an immense uproar came towards him, and, closing his eyes, Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, re-entered conquered Jerusalem.

In the camp at Riblah, Nebuchadnezzar was waiting for his victorious army and, behind it, the conquered, King Zedekiah, the royal family, all the high officials of Jerusalem, the officers, and the wealthy citizens, who were plodding under the burning sun from the city to the Orontes.[86]

He was exasperated by the slow approach of his hour of triumph. He walked rapidly through the camp, went up into the oak-woods above it, and, with his hand shading his eyes, searched and searched through the distant landscape, which trembled with the heat, for the pleasing vision which it should produce. The untiring mason was engraving the ninth [87] column of the colossal inscription dedicated to his glory : " In the might of Nebuchadnezzar and Marduk, I marched my troops to Lebanon. The wicked, above and below, I routed in the land of Judah. I routed the

people of Israel. Of their strong places I made a heap of ruins, what no King before had done."

Behind their triple line of ditches, walls, and earthworks, the Chaldæan tents spread over a wide space. The camp was like a great town, full of orderly bustle. On the tops of the protecting towers the sentries could be seen with their bows and spears. At the end of the camp stood the elliptical tent of the King, its cloth-of-gold hangings drawn wide open.[88] In the darkness of the interior, near a low bed covered with a lion's skin, arms gleamed, their lustre dimmed from time to time by a whirl of dust borne in by the wind. In front, Nebuchadnezzar sat on his throne. A rich carpet, patterned with bunches of flowers and edged with a broad fringe,[89] hung over the back; golden figures of warriors, arranged four by four in three rows, supported the cross-pieces of the seat with their upraised arms; the legs rested on enormous pine-cones. The King was magnificently clad. His tunic and mantle, the latter cut like a chasuble, were adorned with patterns and fringes which outshone those of the throne-rug. On his head was the gold tiara with the two long streamers. His hair and beard were very long and elaborately curled. Cross-shaped ear-rings threw coloured reflexions on to his immobile face. Each of his almost bare arms was enclosed in splendid glittering bracelets. In his raised right hand was an arrow; in his left he held the bow, resting the end on the step of the throne, and his stiff, hieratic pose was an anticipation of future apotheosis.[90]

Round him were gathered his generals and court officials, whose tunics made splashes of green, purple, and gold in the hard sunlight. Far in front of them, the eunuchs, who knew the Assyrian methods of torture, stood naked to the waist round their apparatus. Suddenly a silence, awful and spontaneous, fell on the camp.

A body of men was advancing slowly in a golden

haze of dust. At their head, Zedekiah dragged himself along on his knees, a bleeding remnant of scarce recognizable humanity. A chain of gold was fixed in his tongue, which showed, horribly swollen, between his lips. His thin chest heaved convulsively, and from time to time he sank down gently in the dust, only to be pulled up by the Chief of the Eunuchs with a sharp jerk of the chain. His low moans were drowned by the exultant hooting of the Chaldæan troops and stifled by his own swollen, bleeding tongue, and he resumed his miserable progress, almost unconscious. His poor failing eyes saw nothing but the high throne before the golden tent, the end of his tragic journey; the gold chain and the curses and filthy insults drove him on. Behind him came his two sons, then Seraiah, the High Priest of the Temple of Jerusalem, Zephaniah, the Second Priest, three Keepers of the Door of Jehovah, an administrative officer of the army,[91] five "of them that were in the King's presence, and the Scribe of the Captain of the Host, which mustered the people", and yet others; all the chief men, civil, military, and religious, of the kingdom of Judah were there, an unhappy band whose names are not recorded.[92] The procession advanced slowly with a jerky, automaton-like step, now and again accelerated by the whistle of the hippopotamus-hide whips with which the soldiers scourged the bent backs of the prisoners.

Irresistibly drawn by the vision of triumph and horror, Nebuchadnezzar rose slowly from his throne and gazed his fill at the long file of chained figures which was coming towards him, to pay the price of his glorious destiny. Far in the south a bonfire was rising to the sky, which was draped in dark clouds lit by ruddy reflexions. In a harmony of fire and blood, Jerusalem and its Temple were burning, as Nineveh had burned in old days. Nebuzar-adan had arranged everything admirably. To avenge Marduk on Jeho-

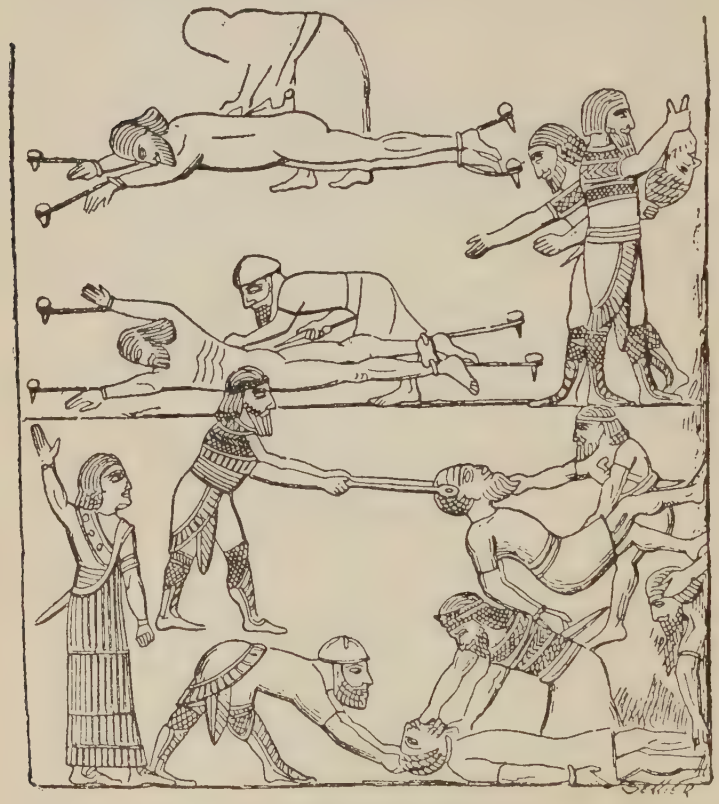
vah, this supreme holocaust was necessary; Temple, Palace, and town had to be burned. Over the smoking, uninhabited ruins Jehovah could still attempt to reign and to conquer the world, if he liked!

The Chaldæan army was howling round Nebuchadnezzar, acclaiming its King and clamouring for its victims. Without any show of emotion, though he was drunk with pride, Nebuchadnezzar ordered that the rites consecrated by tradition should be performed. With a single blow, the eunuchs drove their knives into the throats of Zedekiah's two young sons,[93] and they fell without a cry at the feet of their father, who, on his torn knees, with the gold ring in his tongue, was awaiting his turn.[94] Nebuchadnezzar now stood before him; a eunuch jerked back the head of the King of Judah,[95] and with eyes starting from their sockets he saw his conqueror take his gold dagger.[96] The sun, now low on the horizon, shone into his face; he saw a flash like lightning, and two red lines ran down his cheeks. Meanwhile, the flames of Jerusalem rose ever higher, casting showers of sparks into the pale blue sky, which seemed as if amazed to see such stars in the daytime.[97]

In the camp the soldiers had thrown themselves on the prisoners. Loud cries went up, followed by long silences, the yelling of wretched men as their tongues were torn out, as they were flayed alive, scalped, crucified, with refinements of cruelty to prolong their suffering and to make the victory yield the last possible ounce of delight.[98]

Next day a storm-wind rose, and the tent-cloths fluttered and flapped as they were rolled up; the camp of Riblah was breaking up, and Jerusalem was left behind, a heap of burnt-out ruins and earth red with blood. In that desolation a few shadowy figures, saved from the general disaster by some miracle, wandered among the warm stones and the bodies. Near the ruins of the Temple, Jeremiah, now white-

headed, was kneeling. He struck his brow against the ground, and then looked up, with hands clasped and tears running down his cheeks; in a voice still full of trust in the justice of his God, he raised his lamentation



TORTURE OF PRISONERS.

From Layard. The upper register shows two Elamite chiefs being flayed alive after the battle of Tulliz.

to Jehovah: "How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and a princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her

cheeks. Her adversaries are become the chief, her enemies prosper; for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions. Her children are gone into captivity before the enemy. Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me." [99] The old prophet thought of the barbarous invaders who had come to carry out the threat of the prophets against his country, and to try to bury its soul for ever in lifeless ruins. His heart still burned with a faith which would not despair, which found an ineffable joy in being able to come and weep there, on the ruins which he knew surely would be built up again. In the presence of the nothingness of human glory, he was suddenly filled with a deep, unspeakable hope in God.[100]

Plunged in darkness for ever, Zedekiah marched on behind his conqueror's chariot. Double rings on his arms and ankles made sores which chafed more painfully with every step.[101] In his aching head he still heard the crackle of flames, the crash of falling walls, the mingled din of men tortured and things destroyed. Nothing was left, nothing at all, of his Palace, the Temple, the city.[102] Some time passed, and he was still marching. Was that the cool fragrance of the valley of the Kidron, which came borne on the wind? He breathed deeply, and tried to disentangle the sounds which he heard about him, his only remaining contact with life. A clinking of gold and silver, in time to the pace of men or the longer stride of camels—that was the riches of Jerusalem, bound, like himself, for Babylon. Was it possible that the pillars of Solomon's Temple were there, cut in pieces and heaped in sacks, with the seven-branched gold candlesticks, the sacred vessels, and the shields from the House of the Forest of Lebanon? All the wealth accumulated through hundreds of years! He had indeed lost everything—kingdom, capital, palace, armies, riches, children—

everything, to the very light of day. Jehovah had foretold it through the mouth of his prophets, and he had not believed.

As for Jehovah, he had lost nothing, for he had no need of the riches of a temple for his worship. If he had allowed the destruction of his house of gold, cedar, and brass, it was because, alone of all the gods, he was pure spirit. He had never permitted men to represent him in human or animal form, wishing them to understand thoroughly that his divine essence was spiritual. His temple was in the hearts of all his worshippers; with them, he would be in Babylon, as he was in Jerusalem among the ruins. Jehovah was wherever his servants were.

A halt. From the sudden chill, Zedekiah was aware that dusk had fallen. At the back of his eyes, closed for ever, he felt a longing for the coming night. He lay down on the warm ground, and peace gradually descended on the slumbering camp. But Zedekiah could not sleep; he was still brooding on his tragic fate and its inevitableness. He shivered. Near by, a noise went up in the darkness, a low, continuous noise, like that of a marching throng; it was his people, who, on the road to exile, were murmuring prayers full of trust, the supreme, divine consolation of their human distress.

"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me." [103]

Was it possible, thought Zedekiah, that annihilation should ever overtake this people, which, though racked by suffering, still thirsted for eternity, and revived in the depths of its soul the old, dead hopes, adoring its God when he was poor, hunted, and persecuted with more confidence that when he shone in glory? The whispering of prayers ceased, and hours passed. Zedekiah reflected that the prophecies of the *nabis*, which had come true for the past and the present,

THE TRIBUTE OF JEHU

From the Black Obelisk

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would likewise come true for the future. Had not the voice of Jeremiah risen from the cistern, declaring: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land"? [104]

Might and wealth would pass away. Marduk, who was loved because he was rich and victorious, would pass away; Jehovah would live for ever, because he was worshipped even when he had lost all. Three hundred years ago, the prophet Hosea had said: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight." [105] And Isaiah had added, "Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust, for your dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall restore the dead to life." [106]

The night passed, and other nights and days came, which Zedekiah could not count. But one morning, mingling with the incessant, monotonous tramping of the troops, he heard other noises, which increased as he went on—dogs barking, horses neighing, the dull munch of grazing cattle, the call of shepherds, and the chanting of boatmen, amplified by the water. Life sprang up from every side at once, surrounding him and enfolding him as if to tear him from the lonely misery of his soul. A sound broke out and swelled until it was one frantic cry of joy. Babylon, lifted up with an impulse of collective pride, was welcoming its victorious King. A sudden stop, in the fierce sun, whose reverberation he could feel at the back of his sightless eyes. The walls were near, and their shadow threw a cloak of coolness over Zedekiah.

The gates of Babylon, made entirely of cedar-wood studded with iron nails and lined with brass, swung slowly open on their copper hinges, letting out a dull

roaring like that of a wild beast gaping before his prey. Inside the city the crowd were running together from every quarter to see the triumphal procession, the order of which had been arranged by Nebuzar-adan and Neriglissar. The nobles had left their palaces, the merchants their shops, and even the women, carrying their children, had deserted their hearths.

A terrific ovation greeted the gaily marching Babylonian troops. Then there were hoots and insults, as the Israelites came past, more slowly on their bleeding feet, and singing. For the delight of that cruel populace, they had received a curt Aramaic order to sing the sweetest hymns of Zion, as they had done at home in the Temple, to the accompaniment of harps, lyres, and double flutes. From throats constricted by thirst and suffering, the song which extolled Jehovah went up as a hymn to the glory of Nebuchadnezzar.

"Glorious art thou and excellent, on the mountains from whence thou fallest on thy prey." [107]

The hooting and insults were redoubled; the mob tried to repeat the psalm, in derision. The yelling, which was fiercer than the baying of dogs, reminded Zedekiah of that other day when, on his embassy to Babylon, he had seen the same crowd in the streets and on the terraces, with the same hatred in their eyes as he now heard on their lips. But then he had walked as a free man, and all had made way before him. He was awakened from his thoughts by shrill cries of pain, the awful cries of women, among which he recognized the voices of his mother and his wives. He knew that their noses and tongues were about to be pierced, to affix the gold chain on which they would be led, tied behind himself to the chariot of the conqueror. He strained all his forces to break his bonds, but in vain; his arms, bound behind his back, only felt the cruel fetters bite deeper into the lacerated flesh, and some one came up, and refixed the ring in his distorted mouth, wide open from pain.

He heard the troops go by. They now had their booty with them. First, in a cloud of dust, came the captured beasts—the camels, padding along unevenly, the sheep, a shuffling mass, from time to time heaving spasmodically, and the cattle lowing, while calves leapt in panic. The cries of the mob came still louder, full of greed and wonder; that must be the sacred vases, the pillars of the Temple, the golden vessels, and the splendid shields, exciting the covetous joy of the Babylonians.[108]

There was a long silence, while the multitude held its breath. The creaking of a chariot, the clatter of hoofs. As from a single throat, a great shout of love and pride went up, drums thundered, cymbals clashed. Nebuchadnezzar was there, towering in hieratic majesty above the people. In his glory, he must seem to them like the very embodiment of that Babylon which had no ideal beyond luxury and such conquests as brought profit to its trade. Soldiers pushed Zedekiah into his place behind the chariot, and he followed, the representative of the people of great celestial dreams, chained to the wheel of fortune, the transitory reality of this world.

In its rapture the crowd greeted its King with the praises addressed to Marduk in the Seventh Tablet of the Creation:

"His word is stable; his command altereth not.
No god undoeth the word of his mouth;
When he is angry, no god withstandeth his wrath." [109]

Nebuchadnezzar was intoxicated by the apotheosis which he had so long desired. He thought of all that he might now expect from his triumphant destiny. He no longer saw anything but his own thoughts, reaching into the future; he did not even hear the acclamations of the people:

"Among the men who are to come, in the oldness of days,
May that be heard without ceasing, may that be carried on to eternity." [110]

In the wake of the enthusiasm in which the conqueror was driving towards the highest honours, Zedekiah heard nothing but the groans of his mother and his wives, and the insults which the people flung at them. The popular fury was only whetted by the spectacle which should have glutted it. Not satisfied by that pain and tribulation, it clamoured, with curses, for more indignities and further torments.

A chorus of *narus* and *kalus*, accompanied by large drums, broke into the hymn which celebrated the return of Marduk from the land of Elam, as a supreme honour to Nebuchadnezzar as he passed the guard into the Citadel:

"The people of the land behold his great stature.
Because of the splendid lord, they are radiant and joyous, and all look upon him.
He comes in, he comes to dwell in his house of rest.
The gate of glory, the building of his lordliness was filled with jubilation."

The hymn died away in the distance. Zedekiah was rudely dragged to one side. The clank of his chains echoed under a vaulted roof; there was the creak of heavy doors dragged open, followed by a gust of icy wind. Doubtless his prison, in the gate of the Palace. Yes, they were clamping him to a cold, damp wall. The mob fell on him, and he reeled and fell under a rain of blows and kicks. Nebuchadnezzar did not imitate Ashurbanipal's treatment of his prisoners at Nineveh, causing wild pigs to be chained up near him to harry him in his weariness; but above his head, for seven days, a people already drunk with pride would eat and drink its fill. To his soul the prophecies of Jeremiah now brought a supreme consolation, foretelling as they did the inevitable end of those who live without hope or faith.

Since the first siege of Jerusalem, eleven years ago, there had not been such feasting in Babylon. The

King only entertained his people thus after a triumph. In the courts of the Palace, stuffs of bright colours had been hung up by order of Ashpenaz, dividing them into enormous banqueting-halls. The people were admitted freely during the seven days of the feast; there were couches and stools for all, and they were served by slaves who had orders to refuse them nothing. Men, women, and children, of all ages and conditions, came in thousands. The last-comers stood in rows along the swaying, coloured walls, awaiting their turn. Their eyes shone at the prospect of being able presently to gorge themselves like the rest. The smell of cooked meats mingled with the reek of hot breath. Near the kitchens there were great open fires on which oxen, sheep, and goats were roasting. There was continual coming and going between the banqueting-halls, the barracks, and the ramparts, for the King had ordered that soldiers detained on duty should have as much meat and wine as they wanted taken to them. The immense supplies of food and drink excited the greed of empty stomachs and dry throats. The wine-jars and wine-skins, whether their contents came from Assyria, Elam, Syria, or Egypt, were emptied as soon as filled. The wine collected on the ground in great red pools, which sometimes brought a slave tumbling down and sent his silver dishes jingling in every direction. In the whole city there was no head strong enough to survive those varied and repeated potations, and the entire population reeled.[111]

As was customary, Nebuchadnezzar entertained the generals, the chief officials of the Palace, and his ministers in the throne-room. Reclining on a couch at the end of the room,[112] he looked down the long rows of tables with lions' legs and gold feet. Each table was set with four places, and the whiteness of the table-cloths of pure Babylonian muslin mingled with the glitter of goblets consisting of gold cups set in the jaws of raging lions. Along the walls and between

the tables, great terra-cotta jars stood in sixes on iron stands, their sides being adorned with mosaics as gorgeous as the flowers with which they were filled.

The banqueters sat face to face.[113] On the gaudy woollen carpets with which the ground was covered for this very special occasion, the stools presented the rams' heads with which they were decorated at the corners in long straight lines. On the right of the King's couch were the heir to the throne, Evil-Merodach, and his children; a little further were Neriglissar and Nabonidus; then came the ministers. Processions of slaves with curled hair, wearing very short smocks above their bare legs, went round unceasingly. One table after another was heaped with shell-fish sprinkled with spices and fried locusts, a special delicacy; then with meat, such as antelope, hare, partridge, wild calf, and wild ass, all very rare; and lastly with pyramids of fruit—grapes, melons, water-melons, lemons, figs from Opis, and pomegranates, which bore witness to the luxuriance of the Babylonian gardens.[114]

The prelude to a hymn was softly played on lyres, and voices burst into song. A small troop of musicians, twenty-six in number,[115] advanced into the space in the middle of the room surrounded by the tables, and arranged themselves. Seven of them twanged the eight or nine strings of a triangular harp; two struck the ten strings of the psaltery,[116] hung from the neck,[117] with a stick held in the right hand while they thrummed with the left; another beat a little round drum. To right and left of these, six women and nine children sang shrilly, clapping their hands. With his back to the banqueters,[118] a eunuch marked the time with two reeds in his outstretched hands. Never had such a magnificent orchestra been heard before.[119] In spite of the excellence of the food and the abundance of the wine, the feasters were silent. The shouts of the populace, gormandizing in the courts, were only a distant hubbub, forming a deeper, more human accom-

CHALDÆAN ORCHESTRA

Fragment of a large steatite vase. From Léon Heuzey, in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 1912

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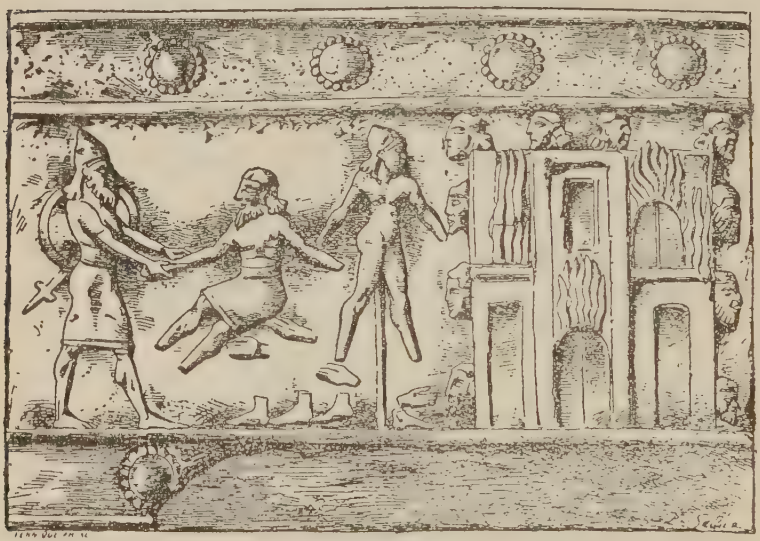
paniment to the hymn [120] which conveyed to the King the love and gratitude of his people.

In one corner of the room, special eunuchs who were in charge of the wine performed the ritual of their office. Even the finest wines could not be drunk as they came from the cellar. Various spices had to be added, to bring out their bouquet and to increase their potency. Several of the eunuchs ground intoxicating substances in stone mortars, moistening them with rare essences, and ladled the aromatic paste with gold spoons into amphoras of clay with rims of chased silver which reached as high as their chests. A continual stream of cup-bearers came up with goblets,[121] which they filled at the amphoras and then served to the guests.[122]

Night had fallen. Men became more and more drunk, and the tables seemed to heave in the thick atmosphere, as a result of the unsteady light of the torches or of uncertain eyes, in which flames were likewise dancing. All gave themselves up to their dreams of bliss. Now that Jerusalem was destroyed, Tyre would not hold out, and Egypt lay ready for them to loot. What wealth awaited them! They could stretch their greedy hands over the whole world; they could use the new treasures to build up new business; they could speculate, and grow rich, and richer, and richer!

Soon nothing was left of the famous etiquette which was so strictly enforced in the King's presence. But, in spite of the shouting and the singing, fear clutched at men's throats, and, more effectually than the fumes of drink, closed their mouths. One phrase wrongly interpreted, one word out of season, and there was risk of the royal displeasure, and death.[123] Nebuchadnezzar, his eyes set under the diadem glittering with rosettes of gems, sought for an echo to the thoughts which haunted him, the desire to make his glory eternal. By his side, the already degraded features of his heir

wore a mask of helpless vacuity, and the eyes of Neriglissar contained only greed and hatred. In those about them, drunkenness revealed the marks of the lowest instincts; their desires did not reach beyond the pleasures which were offered to them—wine, food, gold, and women. The drunken yells still came up from the courts, like a rising flood of human beastliness let loose. The King went on dreaming.



THE FURNACES.

Ninevite relief, from Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes*.

A red glow appeared in the frame of the doorway, cries of pain could be heard, and flames were seen rising in the distance. They came from the furnaces in which the prisoners, after being flayed alive, found an end to their torment.[184] Nearer, short, sharp cries could be heard. Those were young Israelites, surrendering their manhood to their conquerors for ever.

But Nebuchadnezzar, as if some one had presumed to call him, suddenly turned his head, and fixed his gloomy eyes on one corner of the great hall. There

was a group of figures, motionless and apparently indifferent to the orgy roaring all round. The King divined, rather than saw, that they were the Jewish youths who had been brought up in the school of the Palace.[125] In the midst of the feast which celebrated their final defeat, they found solace for their homesickness in building up, in their hearts, their shattered city and their demolished Temple. Why did those dark eyes, which, alone in that assembly, should have been sad, show a shining light of hope? Their lips were moving. What were they murmuring? Prophecies again, and they were looking at him with a gentle smile—at him, their conqueror! Nebuchadnezzar felt suddenly weary, and a long shudder passed through him. He remembered the last prophecy of Jeremiah: "I will make drunk the princes of Babylon, and her wise men, her captains, and her rulers, and her mighty men; and they shall sleep a perpetual sleep, and not wake, saith the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts." [126]

The King's temples were throbbing. He dully let the gold vase fall from his hand; a red pool spread at his feet, and he shivered. Above the plaudits and the shouts and the songs which celebrated his triumph, what was that noise far away there, that rumbling sound? It was like a hostile army storming the walls! Fear flung him bolt upright. Down there, at the door of the throne-room, was not that a Persian warrior, whose shadow was gradually reaching towards him? But the doorway framed nothing but the breaking dawn, a thin bar of pink above the horizon.

NOTES ON CHAPTER SIX

[1] "Thus, when Eannatum, *ishakku* of Lagash, was attacked unprepared by the men of Umma, he lay down in the temple of his god Ningirsu to learn by a dream what line of conduct he should pursue. Ningirsu stood by his head, and revealed that Babbar would march at his side, and promised him victory" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 155).

[2] Diodoros states that the Chaldæans explained dreams as portents. The interpretation of dreams was governed by regular rules among them, and formed part of the science of terrestrial omens. Dreams are among the omens discussed in a work, a copy of which was found in the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh.

[3] Herodotos (iv, 172) ascribes a similar custom to the Nasamones of the coast of Libya. "This is how they practise soothsaying. They go to the tombs of their ancestors, where they pray, and then sleep. If they have dreams during their sleep, they make use of them in their conduct."

[4] Lenormant, in his *Divination chez les Chaldéens*, writes as follows:

"We have here a kind of mental epidemic peculiar to this period of history, which raged from the Euphrates to the Nile and to the western end of Asia Minor. This extraordinary development of the superstitious belief in dreams and of its influence on the conduct of rulers and peoples for three hundred years is a phenomenon to which sufficient attention has not hitherto been paid, and a cause for it must be sought.

"Now, the three centuries in which it is found are precisely those of the great conquests of Assyria and of Babylon after her, the centuries during which, thanks to those conquests, the civilization, the ideas, arts, and religion of Assyria spread over all Western Asia with an irresistible ascendancy and even influenced Egypt. It is hard not to connect the two facts; one is compelled to believe that the fact that dreams played such a great part in history from the beginning of the eighth century to the end of the sixth was a result of the general diffusion and preponderance of the doctrines of Chaldæan divination."

[5] Lenormant, *ibid.*, p. 134; Strabo, xvi, p. 378; Oppert,

Études assyriennes, pp. 63–6. The Chamber of the Oracle, *Bit-assaput*, in the pyramid of the Royal City of Babylon, was the same room as that described as the burial-chamber of Marduk. This supports the suggestion that rites of incubation were performed in it, for people used to go and sleep by tombs in order to have prophetic dreams. Isaiah was reproving his people for this when he called them " A people which remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments " (lxv, 4).

[6] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 153.

[7] The second of the four fragments of the great treatise compiled by order of Sargon I (Lajard, *Culte de Mithra*, pl. xvii, No. 88).

[8] Lenormant, *Divination*, p. 57.

[9] Delaporte, *loc. cit.* I have shown above, in Chap. IV, and shall discuss more fully in Chap. X, the fact that the Book of Daniel cannot be taken as a historical basis for an account of Nebuchadnezzar, since it was not written until four hundred years after his death. Therefore the reader must not be surprised to find here no mention of the two famous dreams which Nebuchadnezzar has in that book. As I show elsewhere, the King in the Book of Daniel must have been Nabonidus, since it was in his reign that Babylon was taken by Cyrus, not in Nebuchadnezzar's.

[10] " The account of my great kingdom in a dream was related to Gyges by Assur, thus : ' Of Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, the beloved of Assur, his princely yoke take, his majesty reverence, and submit to his dominion. By making obeisance and giving tribute may thy words come to him.' The day he saw that dream, to pray for my friendship his messenger he sent to my presence " (Smith, *History of Assurbanipal*, pp. 73–4).

[11] Ashurbanipal says as follows in his Annals : " In those days, then, a seer in the middle of the night slept and dreamed a dream, thus : ' Concerning the matter which Sin was arranging, and of them who against Assurbanipal, King of Assyria, devised evil, battle is prepared ; a violent death I appoint for them ; with the edge of the sword I will destroy their lives.' This I heard, and trusted to the will of Sin, my Lord " (*ibid.*, pp. 156–7).

[12] " I prayed to the lofty Ishtar, I approached to her presence, I bowed under her, her divinity I supplicated, and she came to save me. Thus : ' Goddess of Arbela, I am Assurbanipal, King of Assyria. O thou Goddess of War, Teumman, King of Elam, gathered his army and prepared for war, he urges his fighting men to go to Assyria. O thou Archer of the Gods, throw him down and crush him ! ' My acceptable prayer Ishtar heard, and ' Fear not,' she said. ' At the lifting up of thy hand which thou liftest, thine eyes shall be satisfied with judgement.

I will grant favour.' In the month Elul, the festival of Assur the Great, I trusted to the message of Ishtar, my Goddess, who is unchanged. I gathered my men of war, and directed the march" (*ibid.*, pp. 120–7).

[13] Did Nebuchadnezzar see, in the solitude of the night, the mercenaries of the Persian Xerxes, when he returned defeated from Salamis, turning the rage of their master against this temple of the Foundations of the Earth and sacking the pyramid, wishing to take for him the coffin of Bel and, above all, this House of the Oracle? Ctesias relates that Xerxes destroyed the temple of Bel and violated the tomb, but found nothing in it but a coffin half full of oil.

That there was a tomb of Bel in Babylon is asserted by Arrian, Ctesias, Strabo, Ælian, Diodoros, and Herodotos. Alexander intended to rebuild the temple, and ordered the Babylonians to clear the ruins for the purpose. Bel became the defence of the Royal City and still protected Babylon. When the Seleucids and the Arsacids came, they took the bricks to build Seleuceia and Ctesiphon.

This oracle in the Ziggurat of Babylon plays an important part in the stories of the death of Alexander. It was in its name that the Babylonians tried to deter the Macedonian hero from entering the city at a certain moment and on a certain side, but he would not listen to them, supposing that their advice was interested (Arrian, *Anabasis*, v, 16).

[14] Later history records several dreams of kings, such as that in which Crœsus was warned of the death of his son Atys (Hdt., i, 34). Astyages had two visions foretelling the wonderful future of the child to be born of his daughter Mandane (Hdt., i, 107). The kingship of Darius, son of Hystaspes, was announced to Cyrus in a dream (Hdt., i, 109). The Ethiopian Sabacon resolved to evacuate Egypt in consequence of a dream reminding him of the oracle delivered by Ammon of Napata on his accession (Hdt., ii, 139). There are many other instances. Jeremiah had to remind the Jews constantly that Jehovah strictly forbade the practice of sleeping on tombs in order to obtain prophetic dreams (xxvii, 9–10; xxiii, 32) and that of interpreting false dreams. Isaiah and Zechariah did the same.

[15] As far as we know, this was the only oracle which Nebuchadnezzar received before starting on the campaign. It is emphatic enough.

[16] Ezek., xxi.

[17] Jer., xxxiv, 1. Ctesias, writing of the army of Semiramis, says: "It was composed of 3,000,000 foot-soldiers, 500,000 horsemen, 100,000 war-chariots, and over 100,000 camel-riders, armed with swords four cubits long." He cannot even pretend

to be telling the truth. My previous estimate of 120,000 men in all is more likely.

[18] Ezek., xxi, 21 (R.V.). The cuneiform texts have so far yielded no confirmation of this passage or mention of divination by arrows. But on Babylonian and Assyrian cylinders we often find representations of divining-arrows. They are nearly always eight in number, and are just like those described in the Mussulman authors' accounts of the ritual of the pagan Caaba. Marduk and Ishtar hold them in their hand. These are the gods of the planets Jupiter and Venus, which the Arabian astrologers still call the Great Fortune and the Small Fortune. The arrows, without points or feathers, which the Chaldæans, and the Arabs after them, used for fortune-telling, are just like the tamarisk-sticks used by the Magi of Media for the same purpose. Tablet K 142 on the British Museum (Lenormant, *Choix de textes*, No. 96) leads one to suppose that the casting of lots mentioned there must have been very similar in form to this method of drawing lots. Herodotos also mentions it among the Scythians (iv, 67), Tacitus among the Germans (*Germ.*, 10), and Ammianus Marcellinus among the Alans (xxxi, 2). Nebuchadnezzar only asked the arrows what route he should take and what city he should besiege first; this is "secondary divination".

[19] Ezek., xxi, 25.

[20] Jer., xxxvii–xxxix.

[21] "The camp of the besiegers was set on the plateau where the Russian settlements now are. The city, which was surrounded by steep slopes on three sides, was open to attack on the north alone" (Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, vol. iii, p. 349).

[22] Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 372.

[23] The siege of Samaria by Sennacherib had lasted three years, and that of Jerusalem barely two.

[24] "Religious excitement at this time was extreme. In the sixth century, under the pressure of Nebuchadnezzar, the same phenomena were to be seen as appeared six hundred and sixty years later, in the siege of Titus" (Renan, vol. iii, p. 349).

[25] *Ibid.*; Jer., xxxviii, 4.

[26] Jer., xxxix.

[27] Jer., xxi, 1–7; xxxvii, 3 ff.

[28] Renan, vol. iii, pp. 349 ff.

[29] Ezek., xxiv, 21. This prophecy is described as having been delivered on the day of the investment of Jerusalem. Chaps. XXX–XXXII of the book, which speak of the crushing of Egypt by Nebuchadnezzar, are like Victor Hugo's *Châtiments*, as Renan observes, and Hugo had a great admiration for the prophet. Unlike the prophecies of Jeremiah, those of Ezekiel were not fulfilled at once.

[30] The inscriptions of Wadi Brissa, for which see Langdon.

[31] The figure of the conqueror can still be seen, much worn, in his tiara, facing the right and seizing with his arm a lion which has reared up to attack him. The features were already unrecognizable when Pognon, the French Consul at Baghdad, discovered the inscription in 1887. This would have been our only certain portrait of Nebuchadnezzar.

[32] Ezek., xxix, 19; Plessis, *Les Prophéties d'Ézéchiel contre l'Égypte*.

[33] Ezek., xxvi, 7.

[34] The soldiers of Israel had worn helmets since the time of Uzziah (2 Chron., xxvi, 14), and had formed a standing army since the time of Saul. The cavalry had been created under Solomon. The Jewish mercenaries were admirable soldiers on account of their loyalty. There were large numbers of them in the armies of Alexander, Seleucos Nicator, and the Ptolemies.

[35] Jer., xxxii.

[36] With reference to all these scenes, Renan writes: "We already see the emergence of a kind of monastic spirit, which had no notion of military honour and regarded resistance to fate as mere pride" (vol. iii, p. 351).

[37] Deuteronomy.

[38] See above, ch. iii.

[39] Jer., xxxiv, 7 ff.; Deut., xv, 14.

[40] Formerly there had been an army for each Tribe, each with its light infantry, bowmen, slingers, and heavy infantry. They were armed with heavy spear, breastplate, and great shield. The priests blew trumpets during battle (Numbers, x, 9).

[41] Renan, vol. iii, p. 355; Jer., xxxix, 7 ff.; Deut., xv, 14.

[42] Psalm lxxii.

[43] See also Renan, p. 145.

[44] "The attempts of modern architects to reconstruct the Temple of Jerusalem from the data in the historical books (1 Kings, vi–vii; 2 Chronicles, ii–iv), on the supposition that they were correct, have failed. The descriptions are full of impossibilities; not one figure is true. On the other hand, we can be certain as to the general aspect of the Temple. It was an Egyptian temple of medium size, with a vestibule formed by *antæ*, an architrave, and two heavy pillars of brass" (Renan, vol. ii, p. 142).

[45] 1 Kings, vi, 16, 21.

[46] *Ibid.* See also Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes modernes*, vol. iv, p. 324.

[47] Renan, vol. ii, p. 145; 1 Kings, vii.

[48] Renan, vol. ii, p. 146; 1 Kings, vi. No credible restoration of the "New Temple" can be based on the vision of Ezekiel (xli, 26).

[49] 2 Kings, xxiii, 25, 29 ff. Josiah had died at the age of thirty-eight, while fighting as the loyal ally of Babylon against Necho, who invaded Syria at the time. The party of the prophets had some difficulty in explaining the early and undeserved death of a prince who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord. "And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart," says the Second Book of Kings (xxiii, 25), and it lays the whole blame of Megiddo on Manasseh, the impious king whose descendants had to pay for his sins, in accordance with the Jewish morality of the time. See Renan, vol. iii, pp. 190 ff., and all ch. xiv, for the effects of the centralization of worship at Jerusalem.

[50] Jer., xxxiv, 21.

[51] Psalm xx, perhaps composed in the time of Josiah.

[52] Gen., xv, 10; Renan, vol. iii, p. 355.

[53] Jer., xxxvii, 5 ff.; xxxiv, 7 ff.

[54] Nebuchadnezzar hurriedly raised the siege of Jerusalem in order to go south to meet Apries (Renan, vol. iii, p. 358).

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] "What is certain, is that Egypt was not invaded. Perhaps Nebuchadnezzar and Apries made peace at the expense of their weaker allies. Nebuchadnezzar promptly returned north" (Renan, *loc. cit.*).

[57] The Bible speaks of these officials entering Jerusalem after the fall of the city and organizing the pillage.

[58] See Renan, vol. ii, pp. 529 ff. Samaria fell in 721 to Sargon, the successor of Shalmaneser.

[59] Duc de Luynes, *Voyage d'exploration de la Mer Morte*; Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. ii, pp. 1–6; vol. iii, pp. 40–1, 49–58.

[60] Joshua, xix, 35.

[61] Renan, vol. iii, pp. 37 ff.

[62] Renan, vol. ii, p. 424. Inequality of condition, which had become very marked in Israel after the prosperity of the reign of Jeroboam II, had naturally created rich and poor, and the fundamental principle of patriarchal societies, the equality of the heads of families, had been violated. The conviction that wealth was always the fruit of unrighteousness and the horror of luxury excited the most violent denunciations. A certain Amos, a herdsman of the desert of Judæa, was the mouthpiece of the protests of democracy against the necessities of a world which was every day breaking loose from that childish dream. Renan hails Amos, in 800 B.C., as the first journalist, and adds: "From this patron saint of the radical publicist, we have a dozen pro-

phecies, which are among the strangest pages left to us by the distant past. We have here the first voice of a tribune ever heard by the world. 'They turn aside the poor in the gate from their right.' 'Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying, "Let us falsify the balances by deceit, that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes."' 'Woe to them that are at their ease in Zion! that lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock; that drink wine in bowls. . . . Therefore now shall they go captive with the first that go captive, and the banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed.'"

[63] Zech., ix, 9 ff.; Renan, vol. ii, p. 440.

[64] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. vi, p. 194.

[65] Montet, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, pp. 112 ff.

[66] Song of Sol., vii, 6–7, 10 ff.; viii, 6.

[67] 1 Kings, xxi, 1–17.

[68] 2 Sam., i, 21. Saul and his three sons fought against the Philistines and were defeated. Saul slew himself with his sword, his sons were slain, and the Philistines hung their bodies from the walls of Beth-shan (1 Sam., xxxi).

[69] Jer., xx; xxxii, 1 ff.; xxxvii.

[70] Jer., xxxviii, 4.

[71] Jer., xxxviii, 2.

[72] Renan, vol. iii, p. 360.

[73] Jer., xxxviii, 5–38.

[74] Jer., xxxiii, 4–10.

[75] Jer., xxxiii, 14–26.

[76] Psalm xiii.

[77] Jer., xxxviii, 17–18.

[78] *Ibid.*, 19.

[79] *Ibid.*, 20–8.

[80] Renan, vol. iii, p. 360; Jer., xxxvii, 21.

[81] Jer., xxxix, 1–4.

[82] 2 Kings, xxv, 7; Jer., xxxiv, 3 ff.; xxxix, 7; lii, 11.

[83] Psalm iii.

[84] There are two accounts of what happened to Jeremiah when Nebuchadnezzar entered Jerusalem. According to one, Nebuchadnezzar, remembering the services which Jeremiah had rendered his cause, gave orders to Nebuzar-adan and his officers that they should take care of the old man, and he was taken out of his prison and handed to Gedaliah, whom Nebuchadnezzar had set up as governor of the city. This is the more likely version (Jer., xxxix, 11–14). The other shows us the prophet laden with chains among the crowd of captives, and then recognized by Nebuchadnezzar, who conducts him to Gedaliah with

every attention (Jer., xl, xliii). In any case, Jeremiah served the Jewish restoration under the control of Gedaliah.

[85] Jer., xxxix, lii.

[86] About 125 miles.

[87] See Langdon, *Les Inscriptions du Wadi-Brissa*, or *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, pt. i, p. 173.

[88] Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 273.

[89] We can imagine the scene of Nebuchadnezzar receiving the submission of Zedekiah in the camp at Riblah from the famous relief of Sennacherib in the British Museum, and the ensuing tortures, particularly the horrible treatment of Zedekiah, from Botta, *Monuments de Ninive*, pl. cxviii.

[90] "Then they took the King, and carried him up unto the King of Babylon to Riblah in the land of Hamath, where he gave judgment upon him. And the King of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes; he slew also all the princes of Judah in Riblah. Then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah; and the King of Babylon bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death" (Jer., lii, 9–11).

[91] 2 Kings, xxv, 12–22; Jer., xl, 7.

[92] Nebuzar-adan had ordered the deportation of all whom he found in the city, even those who had gone over to the Chaldæans, 832 persons in all (Jer., lii, 29).

[93] The Chaldæans subjected their prisoners to the same tortures as we see depicted on the monuments of Nineveh, and if ever we are lucky enough to find any of the reliefs which adorned their palaces we shall see enemies impaled, rebels flayed alive, and their leaders having their tongues torn out.

[94] Jer., lii.

[95] Rawlinson, in *The Five Great Monarchies*, vol. iii, speaks very favourably of Nebuchadnezzar. When, however, he comes to the point in his story at which we now are, he writes: "A few touches of a darker hue must be added to this portrait of the great Babylonian King. The execution of Jehoiakim, and the putting out of Zedekiah's eyes, though acts of considerable severity, may perhaps be regarded as justified by the general practice of the age, and therefore as not indicating in Nebuchadnezzar any special ferocity of disposition. But the ill-treatment of Jehoiakim's dead body, the barbarity of murdering Zedekiah's sons *before his eyes*, and the prolonged imprisonment both of Zedekiah and of Jehoiachin, cannot be thus excused. They were unusual and unnecessary acts, which must be considered to imply a real cruelty of disposition, such as is observable in Sargon and Asshur-bani-pal." Of Nebuchadnezzar's character in general, Rawlinson says: "In temper he is hasty and violent, but not

obstinate; his fierce resolves are taken suddenly and as suddenly repented of; he is moreover capable of bursts of gratitude and devotion, no less than of accesses of fury; like most Orientals, he is vain-glorious; but he can humble himself before the chastening hand of the Almighty; in his better moods he shows a spirit astonishing in one of his country and time—a spirit of real piety. . . . We obtain from the native writer, Berosus, one amiable trait," viz. his building the Hanging Gardens for his wife.

[96] Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. iii, p. 546.

[97] Jer., xxxix, and esp. lii, 12–17; Margolis and Marx, *Histoire du peuple juif*, p. 109; Renan, vol. iii, pp. 363–4.

[98] Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, p. 228. It may be of interest here to give a short account of the way in which the Assyrians and Babylonians treated the conquered in time of war. No quarter was ever shown. After victory, all prisoners were put to death and their heads were stuck up as trophies along the walls of the captured cities. Bodies lay on the battlefield as thick as leaves, and those who escaped sought refuge, often in vain, in the holes in the rocks or the reeds of the swamps while their homes burned.

Ashur-nasir-pal, in the ninth century, was the first to carry off peoples *en masse*. The practice was not yet established in the time of Tiglath-pileser I (twelfth century). After the fall of Damdamusa, Ashur-nasir-pal transported 3,000 prisoners from the city to Amida (Diyar-Bakr). Instances become more frequent under his successors. But it was not until the middle of the eighth century that the practice became a regular institution, under Tiglath-pileser III. Sargon extended it in 172. He subdued the country of Andia in Armenia and transported the inhabitants to the cities of Syria and Commagene, and later he carried off the tribes of the countries of Gandum and Carchemish to Ashur. It was by special favour that he allowed part of the inhabitants of Babylon to remain in their homes. After the fall of Samaria, he reduced 27,280 Israelites to slavery, and conveyed them to Assyria, and after doing so he subdued the Arab tribes and sent them to Samaria, thus making a complete change-over. Sennacherib and his successors adhered to this mistaken policy, which, while giving an appearance of unity to the Assyrian conquests, introduced elements of dissolution which made themselves felt later. There are scenes of all this in the Nineveh reliefs.

Nebuchadnezzar organized the whole business. From his accession, he was at pains to repair the places which were to receive the captives, and when Jerusalem was destroyed the transportation was carried out in a regular and normal fashion. The Babylonian Captivity, which had such tremendous conse-

STATUE OF ASHUR-NASIR-PAL

British Museum. From Maspero

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quences, was at the time merely one of many such episodes in the conquests of Assyria and Babylon.

[99] Lamentations, i, 1 ff.

[100] But, alas, the character of Israel was revealed in the intestine strife which at once broke out in the little Jewish colony of Mizpah, which gathered round Gedaliah. Gedaliah was murdered, and with him the last hope of restoring Jewish society on its old foundations vanished.

[101] The reliefs of Nineveh show how prisoners were chained.

[102] Lebon, *Les Premières Civilisations*. Henceforth Judæa may be struck off the roll of nations. It was in vain that Cyrus issued a decree allowing the Hebrews to return to their country and to rebuild their city. They rebuilt Jerusalem, but all the time they trembled under the menace of the Kings of Persia, who, on the strength of false reports, took alarm every time a stone was added to the walls, and were always interrupting the work.

After that, the independence of the Jews was only nominal. Persians, Greeks, and Romans in turn spread their formidable shadow over the wretched kingdom, which grew rancorous from perpetual subjection and had nothing to console it but its own vainglorious talk. The great dreams of its prophets intoxicated it in its humiliation and misfortune, and the more it was crushed the more conceited it became. Its bragging language amazed the all-powerful Romans, who, knowing that they could crush it at any moment, were content to treat it with contempt until the year 70 of our era, when Titus decided to have done with the vexatious little people once and for all, and gave Jerusalem to the flames.

But at the very moment when that stubborn race ceased to count as a nation, when its dust, scattered to every quarter, was cast along the roads of the world, to be scornfully trampled by marching peoples for centuries, at that tragic moment of its life which seemed to be the last, an obscure Galilæan was born, who was to become the God feared by the most civilized peoples of the world.

[103] Psalm iii, 5.

[104] Jer., xxxiii, 14.

[105] Hos., vi, 1–2.

[106] Isa., xxvi, 19.

[107] Psalm lxxvi.

[108] Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, pp. 385–91.

[109] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 142.

[110] *Ibid.*

[111] Maspero, *Lectures*, pp. 391 ff. It was the custom that all the people of the city, free and bond, should eat and drink at the King's expense as long as the feast lasted. It was a way of

giving them a share of the booty. For seven days on end the doors of the Palace were open to all comers.

[112] In Assyria only the Kings seem to have had the right to eat their meals reclining. The other lords are always represented sitting, as the famous representation of Ashurbanipal at Kuyunjik shows (Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes*, vol. iv, pl. lxxvii). "We have no representation of what feasts and banquets were like among the sculptured monuments of Chaldæa, but the reliefs of Assyria allow us to fill this gap. Since the manners of the two countries were very much alike, we may judge the former from the latter" (Vigouroux, *op. cit.*, p. 475). The Romans reclined at meals (Horace, *Odes*, i, 28, 8; *Sat.*, i, 4, 39).

[113] Vigouroux, *op. cit.*, pl. lxxvii.

[114] Lenormant, *Histoire*, vol. v.

[115] Relief of Ashurbanipal, in Layard, *Nineveh and Babylon*, pl. lxxv; Vigouroux, *op. cit.*, vol. iv, p. 428. "From the Sargonids onwards, bands of musicians constantly appear on the reliefs. They play a dozen different instruments" (Lenormant, *La Divination chez les Chaldéens*, p. 190). The Book of Daniel mentions "cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of musick" (iii, 5).

[116] The Babylonian flute was the ancestor of the Greek pipe (Rawlinson, vol. i, p. 543).

[117] Cf. Dan., iii, 5, 7, 10, 15, and the relief of Ashurbanipal quoted above.

[118] Rawlinson, vol. i, p. 543.

[119] *Ibid.*, p. 542. It was a very great luxury, which only kings allowed themselves. It must have developed, since Ctesias relates that Narramus, a noble Babylonian, gave a banquet with an orchestra of 150 women.

[120] This is the hymn of love with which the people greeted Nebuchadnezzar, based on Boscawen's translation in *Trans. of the Soc. of Biblical Archæology*:

"Long days, long years,
Strong swords, long life,
Years of glory, pre-eminence over kings,
Grant these to the King, my Lord, who has given such gifts to his gods!
May he increase and complete the vast, broad frontiers of his empire and his rule.
Owning kingship, dominion, and supremacy over all, may he reach a great age.
And after the gift of these present days,
In the Silver Mountain of the Celestial Courts,

In the abode of bliss in the light of the Fields of Delights,
May he lead an eternal, holy life,
Before the face of the gods who dwell in Chaldæa."

[121] Many were sacred vessels which had been used by the conquered peoples in their sacrifices. Some would come from Nineveh, others from the Temple of Samaria, or that of Jerusalem. By using them for a profane purpose, you insulted the gods to whom they had belonged, and the pleasure of drinking was enhanced by the thought that you were humiliating foreign deities before your own gods (Maspero, *Lectures*, p. 396).

[122] We know from Nahum (i, 10) that the Assyrians were very fond of wine. Nebuchadnezzar in his Wadi Brissa inscription speaks of " white wine, beer, the *usa* drink, hydromel, siras, red wine " (Langdon, p. 25).

[123] Rawlinson, vol. iii, p. 504. The magicians might have these fears, but the King himself was never very easy. Berosus relates (quoted by Josephus, *In Apionem*, i, 20) that if a king did not satisfy his court, he was put to death with torture rather than dethroned, for all the Babylonians were cruel. The houses of the guilty were razed to the ground.

[124] Vigouroux, *La Bible et les découvertes*, vol. iv, pp. 441 ff. This torture, which was frequent in Assyria and Chaldæa, was unknown in Palestine. The " burning fiery furnace " into which the Three Children were thrown (Dan., iii, 15) was a sort of kiln, used for metal-founding as well as for burning criminals. There was a large opening at the top and a door at the bottom out of which the metal flowed. See Smith, *Dictionary of Antiquities*, p. 546, for a Roman furnace, which gives an idea of the Babylonian one (from a Roman vase).

" The practice of throwing certain criminals into a furnace survived in Persia. Chardin states that in 1662, during a famine, he saw on public places in Isfahan two kilns which were kept constantly burning for a month, to frighten the corn-merchants and to prevent them from taking advantage of the general distress (*Voyage en Perse*, 1735, vol. iv, p. 276) : ' Ali Kulikhan, the Commander-in-Chief of the armies, caused a great kiln to be built on the Royal Square and another on the Public Square, and ordered the criers to publish that those who should sell bread at a higher price than that allowed or concealed their grain would be thrown in alive. These ovens burned continually for a month, but no one was thrown in, because no one would run the risk of such a drastic punishment by disobedience.'

" Ashurbanipal caused a relief to be made on the walls of Kuyunjik, representing two men being flayed alive after having their tongues torn out. A legend explains that they are being

punished for impiety (*Cun. Inscr. of Western Asia*, vol. iii, pl. xxxvii).

" We also know from a cylinder that a blasphemer was burned in a furnace: ' Dunanu and Nebouzalli, men who were over Gambuli, who against my Gods uttered great curses, in Arbela, their tongues I pulled out, I flayed off their skin. Dunanu in Nineveh, over a furnace (*eli makazi*) they placed him, and consumed him entirely ' (Cylinder B, col. vi, in Smith, *History of Assurbanipal*, p. 137) " (Vigouroux, *op. cit.*, *passim*).

[125] Dan., i, 1–21.

[126] Jer., li, 57.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE GREAT NEW YEAR IN BABYLON

On the first day of the month of Nisan, 587, Babylon woke up full of happiness. On the terraces of the temples the incense smoked from dawn, and in the streets all went about in their holiday clothes, apparently without other aim than to make manifest the joy with which the whole city was vibrating. People met and embraced, and there was general cheerfulness everywhere. For this year the ancient festival of the New Year marked the highest point yet reached by the power of Babylon. Jerusalem was destroyed, the Syrian towns were besieged, and could not resist for long, and Egypt, rent by internal disturbances, was awaiting her master.

Never had the national feast inspired such gaiety, and never had there been a keener desire for the traditional ceremonies which symbolized the soul of the country. For twelve whole days, mystical rejoicings, resembling the Christian drama of the Passion followed by an Easter of joyous resurrection,[1] would enthral a multitude, not only of the townsfolk, but of people come from every part of the Empire on donkeys, mules, and camels, bringing with them all their different thoughts and feelings and desires. During the next twelve days, that throng, so full of life, would pass through the phases of meditation, lamentations, and joyous exuberance, itself living through the great mystery of the creation of the earth, the sky, the elements, the gods, and men. The sacred rites, commonly called Akitu or Zagmuku,[2] would culminate in the delivery of the

oracle which would establish the destinies of the kingdom; that would be the supreme conclusion of a feast in which the interests of the temporal power of the King and those of the spiritual power of the priests were united in close communion.

The important thing was that the great god Marduk should bestow the divine sanction on the projects which the King of Babylon had in view for the satisfaction of his own ambitions and the greater prosperity of his people. The whole past, from the beginnings of the world, was evoked, simply to make the people feel how closely the future was bound up with that past, and how completely the past justified the proud confidence with which Babylon expected the future to confirm her dominion over the world. It was, first and foremost, a national festival, in which everything combined to exalt the love of Babylon for herself, her riches, her science, her King, and her gods.

During the twenty years of subjection to Nineveh, the feast had not been held,[3] as a sign of mourning. But to-day the New Year marked the triumph of Marduk, god of Babylon, over Jehovah, the presumptuous god of the Jews, who claimed to rule the whole world.

Other cities of Babylonia—Ur, Erech, Harran—also celebrated the feast of Akitu, just as Lent and Easter are celebrated in every Catholic church, but it was to Babylon that the true worshippers of Marduk, the really devout ones, came at the end of the year from every region to render him thanks and to beg his favour for the year which was coming.[4]

The mysteries began in the temples on the very first day.[5] The whole population left its daily occupations, and on every side there were songs and music, a monotonous, passionate din, inviting hearts to rejoice. At night, when the shadows gathered about the terraces, making them like phantom gardens hanging between heaven and earth, and Esagila, the sanctuary of Marduk, reared its weighty mass like the vision of

a dream, the *urigallu*, clad in linen, lay prostrate before his god in the darkness. He had been there since two hours before dawn, when he had risen in great mystery. While the noises of the festival rose up round the temple in the night, he made humble supplication, speaking the voice of divine prayer elevated above the pleasures of the earth :

" Bel, unequalled in thy wrath,
Bel, kind King, Lord of the Lands,
Who makest the Great Gods favourable,
Lord of Kings, Light of Mankind,
Who dost allot portions,
Thou dost control oracles ; with thine eyes thou dost give the law.
Lord of the lands of thy city Babylon,
Have mercy on the children of Babylon ! " [6]

Like his words, his actions were prescribed by immemorial tradition, and consisted of a gentle swaying and sliding which were themselves a prayer. Behind him, with the co-ordinated movement of a ballet, the *mashmashus* [7] purified the sanctuary with water from the Euphrates, while the *erib-bitis* poured libations on the table and the *kalus*, who appeased the heart of the gods,[8] sang mysterious supplications.

On the second day, while the prayers and hymns continued inside the temple, all began to be lifted up in a great surge of enthusiasm. No one thought any more of the cares and sufferings and vanities of every-day life ; only the future mattered, awakening vague emotions and anxieties.

On the third day the sounds of the festival seemed to abate. Three hours after sunrise, the statuaries attached to the service of the temple came and with due rites shaped the divine effigies.[9] Dances and secular songs gave place to religious litanies ; the infinite mystery of the future cast a troubled gloom over all hearts. But as night fell joy revived ; it was the last evening on which men could still go about their ordinary affairs.

The solemn dawn was near! The streets were crowded with men and beasts.

By the Euphrates the fish-market was held, on which the capital chiefly depended for its food. There was a horrible smell of pickle and fat. Cooks at open-air kitchens offered soup and fried fish to the passers-by, and a hundred trades went on all round.[10] The merchants squatting behind their goods were besieged by customers, whom they vainly tried to keep at bay with their palm-leaf brooms.

Swelling with importance, a royal steward went about, supervising dealings, for the King had a share in all the fisheries of the kingdom. Halting by a boat moored to a quay which was reserved for the sale of sea-fish, he asked the Babylonian correspondent of Sheb-Sin, the great merchant of Larsa, for the tablet showing the accounts of the boat, of which he had just sold the whole cargo. Everything was in order; the revenue would have its due share. He was then borne by the stream of people to the fresh-water fish-market[11]; here, although the hour was late and the harassed police were beginning to complain, business was still lively. The people who dwelt by the canals and rivers, who had the sole right to fish there in return for the duty of dredging them, had supplied the market abundantly against the feast. There were varieties for customers of every class, from the humble *lul-a-ha*, the long-tailed fox-fish, which was sold at six hundred to the shekel, to the *nitug*, a lordly dish, sold at a shekel for the forty-*qa* basket.

The royal steward suddenly perceived a stout merchant whose conscience appeared somewhat uneasy. He was a dealer against whom he had already received several complaints; he made a profit out of the high cost of living, poaching in the water of his neighbours and speculating on prices. The steward quietly summoned the man to his office, and handed him a tablet, on reading which he pulled a long face.[12] "They tell

me that your boats have gone into the districts of Rabi and Shamkani and have fished in their water. I shall delegate an officer of the Palace Gate to put matters in order there. When he comes to your place, you will do well to call in those of your boats which are in the districts of Rabi and Shamkani." The stout merchant returned, with a contrite expression, to his basket. As a fine, he had to supply the priests of Marduk with a whole boat-load of *suhur* (a triangular fish, a sort of turbot),[13] and the baskets of sturgeon which he had not yet sold.

Gradually the animation of the market subsided. The call to prayer drew the crowd to Esagila, round which, along the sacred walls, men were already prostrating themselves in long straight rows, singing in monotonous unison. On the market-place only a small circle of idlers was left. They surrounded a man who was gesticulating and declaiming on a platform. With an enormous pair of pincers, he was tugging at the jaw of a patient whose muffled squawks were drowned by a terrific beating of tambourines. It was the dentist operating, as on all market-days.[14] As he tugged, he chanted the ritual incantation:

"Anu created heaven and earth,
The rivers created the canals,
The canals created the mud-pools,
And the mud-pool created the worm.
The worm goes before Shamash and Ea;
He weeps, and his tears roll down.
'What dost thou give me,' says he, 'for my food?'
'I give thee,' the god answers, 'ripe figs and sirup.'
'What would I do with ripe figs and sirup?
Bring me up between the tooth and gum, and make me live there.
I wish to suck the blood from the tooth and to gnaw the roots in the gum.'"[15]

The tooth resisted, and the dentist pulled desperately at his pincers. The tambourines redoubled their din, but a shriek of pain could be heard, and the practi-

tioner triumphantly waved the tooth, roots and all, aloft. Then, in a voice of victory, he concluded the incantation :

" For saying that, O worm, may Ea punish thee with his mighty hands ! "

On the repeated injunctions of the police, he packed up his paraphernalia and his audience dispersed, taking with them the patient, still quite dazed and eyeing with vague mistrust the prescription which the dentist had handed to him : " Mix *billitu* beer, *killu*, and oil together, say the incantation over them three times, and apply to tooth." [16]

All stopped at the corner of the market-place and gathered round a stretcher on which, respected by the police, a man lay dying. It was an ancient Babylonian custom [17] that sick men, when physicians, magicians, and sorcerers had exhausted their resources and the case was given up as hopeless, should be brought out on the public square, that everybody might ask the symptoms of the malady and offer the fruits of his experience or knowledge—a last consultation which often proved efficacious. The days of the New Year's festival were an especially good time for obtaining such advice. The people who had been watching the dentist leaned over the poor emaciated face ; the seal of death already lay on it, but the eyes shone brightly with the last light of a life which still wanted to hope, and anxiously interrogated the unknown countenances. But none of them gave any sign, and the dying man's eyes wandered in despair. Then, in pity, one of the bystanders leaned forward. He told how he himself had been cured of a similar malady by magic [18] ; a clay figure had been made in his likeness and offered to the demon which tormented him, and the cure had come. The man on the stretcher no longer heard anything, but his face relaxed in a smile, and in the rosy twilight his dimming eyes turned gratefully in the direction of Esagila, where honour was being paid to Marduk.

When the sun set on the fourth day, the population of Babylon was filled with a sense of mystical exaltation which definitely cut it off from all common realities, all the affairs in which it was usually absorbed. It now lived for nothing but the great drama of the Death of Marduk.[19] In participating in the presentation of that drama, in which the King himself would take part, together with the priests, it would enter into communion with the royal and the religious power in one combined glorification of the high position which Babylon had held since the beginning of the world and of the predestined future which, with the grace of Marduk, her science and wealth ensured for her to the end of time. Not one soul thought of going to bed. The streets were full of holiday animation, and those who could not get into the temples, which had been besieged for the last four days, crowded in courts and public places, watching the priests coming and going prior to the procession with which the drama began.

In the Temple of Marduk, hymns and prayers were more ardent than ever. The *urigallu* raised his arm before the statue of the god of Babylon, and said:

"Lord of the Lands, King of the Gods,
Who dost establish the destinies of heaven,
Who givest the holy sceptre to the King who fears thee,
Be kind to thy city Babylon."

He next turned to Belit-Zarpanit, the divine courtesan, the beloved of Marduk, to associate her in his supplication:

"She is mighty, she is a goddess,
Zarpanit, the brightest of the stars, who dwells in Eulhul.
Establish the destiny of the King who fears thee;
Give life to the children of Babylon!" [20]

Then he went out of Esagila, followed by all the priests, and the rapturous populace saw the long procession going along the Sacred Way, in quest of divine Marduk, betrayed and wounded by Bel-Hittiti.[21]

Before Bab-Belit, the Lady Gate, other priests were waiting. Men and women pressed behind them, and the torchlight as it fell on the moving mass revealed expectation in every face, painful anxiety in some and eager hope in others. A panting dialogue began.

"Where is he kept? Where is he imprisoned?" asked the priests who had gone over the city in search of Marduk.

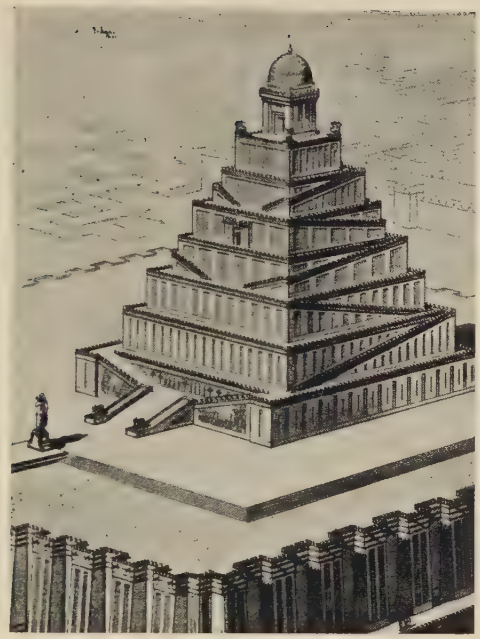
"Call Marduk back to life!" women howled, stretching their arms to the sky and to the earth in supplication to Sin and Shamash.

The priests in the shadow of the gate replied: "After the gods had put him in prison, he vanished from life, very far from the sun and the light; there they let him go down." [22]

Groans and lamentations were heard in the darkness. Priestesses appeared, and joined the sacred actors. They tore their garments and scratched their faces, and in shrill voices broken by sobs they called for vengeance: "The wounds which have assailed him bleed, and in his blood he lies!"

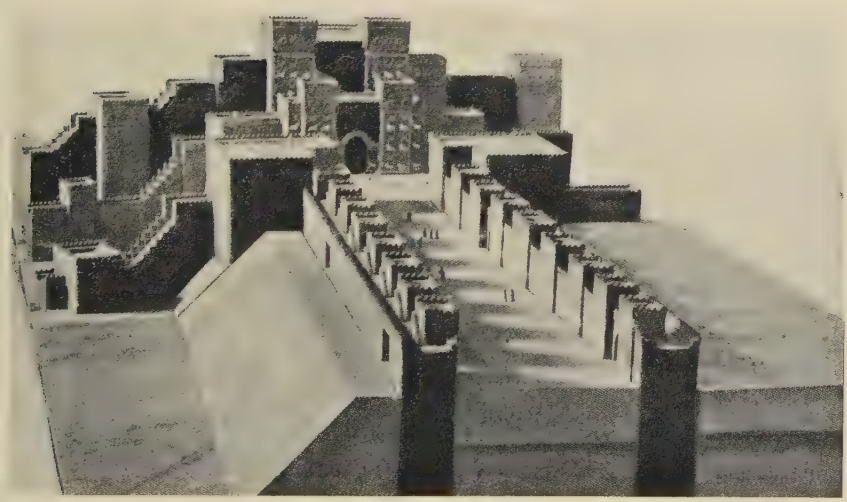
Then a priest came out of the Lady Gate, made up to resemble the wicked Bel-Hittiti who slew Marduk. An immense rage surged in every breast; fists were shaken, and insults and yells of hatred fell on the priest, who cried, "I am not an evil-doer!" On that man, the personification of all their adversities and all their enemies, the mob would have wreaked vengeance for all the disappointments and sufferings of the year. Beside themselves with hate, they yelled for revenge. A prisoner was set in the place of the priest, and when his figure, also made up to represent Bel-Hittiti,[23] soared up above the smoky torches, convulsed by the last jerkings of a hanged man, and swung dismally in the frame of the Lady Gate, a single shout went up, expressing the joy of boundless hopes.

The priestesses slowly turned, and went in melancholy procession to the funerary grill where they



ZIGGURAT

Restoration. From Perrot and Chippiez



THE SACRED WAY

Restoration. From the model in the Staatsmuseum, Berlin

[*face p.* 234

sought for their god in despair.[24] Their notes, deep and shrill, made a weird symphony, and in the wake of their lamentations the crowd started back across the city, tracing a path of light through the darkness. One priestess acted the part of Zarpanit, the lover of Marduk, and sang a lugubrious dirge in a raucous voice. Her shadow was followed over the pavement by something which showed red in the pale light of the moon—a piece of wool dipped " in the heart's blood of Marduk ".

Marduk was now in his tomb in the bowels of Etemenanki, near the gate Bab-sa-Esagila. In the rectangular underground chamber, in which the dense obscurity spread a sacred awe, the priestess who represented the god's beloved sat by his body, which could hardly be seen in the empty darkness. Her despairing lamentations resounded like the call of a terrible fear :

" For love, that he might be healed, she went down there, awaiting his resurrection." [25]

A boundless anguish weighed on the souls of all. Robbed of its god, the earth could not live. " After Marduk had gone into the mountain, the city rebelled in its love," and the ceremonies of mourning for Marduk went on interminably. Pale exorcists, making frightful faces to indicate despair, went to Zarpanit, in the solitary place where she mourned,[26] bringing her the clothes and objects which had belonged to her husband. Anguish was mingled with infinite pity in Zarpanit's reply :

" O my brothers, behold his garments which were brought to Belit Erech !
Behold his robe which was torn from him ! "

Outside the precincts of the temple, the drama of the Passion continued. Priests again ranged through the city ; they must find the miraculous water which should restore Marduk to life. As if to spur on their zeal, from the top of the Terrace of Ishtar and Zamama

a voice rolled down, amplified by the night, on the assembled people. It was Bel-shum-ishkun, the Chief Magician. He had just succeeded his father Nergalorosor, who was now too old to officiate in this capacity. The people marvelled as they heard. The old Poem of the Creation,[27] chanted in a young ardent voice, took on new youth. All listened to the divine mystery.

"*E-nu-ma elis la na-b-usa-ma-mu.*
When the heaven above was not named,
And the earth below had no name,
And no name was uttered, and no destiny was established,
The gods were created, one pair after another, and time went by." [28]

But Tiamat, Chaos, a blind unordered power, gave birth to a series of monsters which Kingu, the husband of her heart, led in an assault on heaven.[29] Against that army of evil forces, the army of the gods arrayed itself, and Marduk alone was capable of commanding it.

Shouts went up from the crowd to the unseen reciter, proclaiming the pre-eminence of Marduk, god of Babylon. If the gods had chosen Marduk to be their master, was Babylon not chosen to be the mistress of the world? From the top of the terrace, as if inspired by heaven, the magnificent voice intoned the summons of Marduk to the gods:

"If I, your avenger,
Must chain Tiamat and make you live,
Make an assembly; exalt and proclaim my destiny." [30]

The voice swelled with pride. After the victory, the gods established the destiny of their avenger Marduk. They prepared a princely dwelling for him, and said:

"We have given thee the kingship over the whole earth.
Let thy destiny be first among the gods,
To destroy and to create.
Speak, and it shall be so.
But cut off the life of Tiamat." [31]

Marduk did not hesitate. He caught Tiamat in a net, he divided her like a fish into two parts, and with those two parts, the day and the night, he made the world.[32] The great voice of Bel-shum-ishkun became more mysterious as he related the making of the stars :

"He built a dwelling for the Great Gods,
The stars, which are in their likeness.
He divided the year into twelve months,
And he made Sin, the Moon, to shine, and gave the night to him." [33]

The people, who had all known the old story since their babyhood, waited silently to hear of the birth of man, whom Marduk modelled in his own image that he might always pay honour to his creator.

"I shall knead my blood,
And I shall make man to arise;
And let him set up the worship of the gods." [34]

Then, without pausing, Bel-shum-ishkun recited the seventh and last tablet, the litany of the fifty names under which men glorify Marduk. He became fervent; with a voice at once sweet and loud he chanted in the old idiom consecrated by the liturgy. The people could not see him; the night enfolded his figure, lost in the sky. Most did not even understand all that he said, but all of them, in silence, with open mouths and faces turned up to the impenetrable sky, strove to interpret the legends which called up in their imaginations and memories the ghosts of their past through the obscure poetry of religious dogma. But when the great voice broke into the praises of Marduk, all thrilled with mystical emotion, and all, in their gratitude and pride, repeated the sacred verses :

"Let men magnify him,
The Lord who felt pity for the captive gods,
And created mankind to deliver them!
May he possess the past and the future, to all eternity!" [35]

In the heart of Etemenanki, where Marduk lay, the priestess still watched by the golden coffin. The voice of the Chief Magician could not pierce the doors of the sanctuary and did not disturb her in her meditation; the sound of her ritual lamentations alone woke the echoes of the death-chamber. Marduk was dead! The world wept.

At the break of the fifth day,[36] a brass drum sounded inside the temple, and the *urigallu* brought the incense-burner and the torch, with which he purified the sanctuary. His long, thin body, enveloped in a white woollen robe laden with trimmings, embroidery, and fringes, lay prostrate, petrified in ecstasy before the statue of the god on whom the destinies of Babylon depended, while the smoke of the censers rose towards it with the prayers of men. Outside, the people were gathering in front of and round about Esagila, where all was ready to receive the King and the thirty-five or forty gods who would come hastening for the resurrection of Marduk.

The crowd was silent, not from absorption in thoughts of death and desolation as on the previous night, but from anxious expectancy and uncertainty. Noon. The enormous red bulk of Babylon baked in the sun. Even the shadows in the depths of the sanctuary were lighter. Everything blazed with light and life. Under the pressure of the heat, it seemed as if the bricks of the city had been crushed down, until only their mass supported the pile of temples and palaces. A thick red dust hung over everything, heavy with the scent of incense and spices. The last shouts, the last hymns, died away, one after another.

Along the Euphrates [37] a stately barge advanced. The two gold masts and the monumental canopy of solid gold, crowned with bunches of waving white plumes, topped the walls. Under the canopy, the colossal golden Nabu, brought out of his temple, came forward, " majestic and grand ".[38] Nebuchad-

nezzar, waiting by a gold table on the river bank, felt the intolerable gaze of the god directed on him. The statue rolled backwards on its pedestal to the shore. Then Nebuchadnezzar offered the twelve loaves on a gold dish and the honey and salt in gold bowls [39] to him who had given him the throne seventeen years ago.

Every temple in Babylon had been opened, and from every side, on waggons and barges and golden litters, all the gods were coming to join great Nabu, like flashing stars around the sun. They moved slowly, on account of their tremendous weight, and before each one the incense smoked in vases. By the Nippur road came Enlil; by the Erech road, Anu, father of the gods; Ishtar came from Kish; Sin, from distant Harran; Bau and Ningirsu, from Lagash; Shamash and Gula from Sippar; Nergal from Cuthah.[40]

All were come to awaken their master in his tomb—divine Marduk, whose strength and splendour could not be annihilated for ever. Nebuchadnezzar took Nabu by the hand, to lead him by the Sacred Way along the Euphrates to the Urash Gate and Esagila. Behind them went the divine procession, step by step. Surrounded by their colleges of priests, all the gods of the celestial spaces, all the forms of godhead, were there, some dragged on their waggons, others borne on the shoulders of the priests and swaying as the crowd pressed forward to see them. The crush was undescribable, and was kept within bounds with great difficulty—a motley host of officials, scribes, merchants, soldiers, and men of all sorts and conditions, all intoxicated with mystic faith. The statues lumbered on towards Esagila, and vanished one by one into the precincts, while the crowd gathered all round in reverent silence. Every minute new worshippers came from the adjoining streets, and now and again a sudden pressure would drive masses of men against the walls with a long-drawn murmur.

Inside the temple the ceremonies were recommencing. They now celebrated the origin of the royal power, which was contemporary with the origin of the world. Nebuchadnezzar must again undergo the trials and perform the rites which had attended his accession.[41] The evening hour had brought its own mystery. In the temple-court the King gazed over the red brick walls to the silent, many-coloured ziggurat of Etemenanki, adorning itself in a golden light for the daily death of the sun. It seemed to sustain the widespread tent of the sky, in which thousands and thousands of stars were kindling, impenetrable and remote. The King was oppressed by that sparkling emptiness, in which stars and planets whirled and perished, or endured for eternities.

He was drawn from his contemplation by shadowy figures moving. Priests brought a white bull[42] to him. He slew it with the sacrificial knife on the gold altar, and, raising his arm, offered it to the gods: "O divine bull, thou art the shining light which lightens darkness." A tall, clear flame enfolded the victim, and white smoke rose towards the statue, on whose golden surface red reflexions flashed. The priests likewise stretched out their hands to the god, begging for the resurrection of Marduk. Their solemn hymn told of the joys of eternity and the rebirth of life.

At the dawn of the ninth day priests presented themselves at the door of the tomb in Etemenanki, bearing the miraculous water. They jostled the doorkeepers. The priestess, who for four days had been bemoaning the death of Marduk, retreated in the darkness to the side of the golden statue, and redoubled her lamentations, as if to assert the rights of her grief over her dead god. But the priests thrust her aside, and their summons broke out like a song of victory and joy: "Come out, Bel, the King awaits thee!" And the great gold statue obediently rolled on its cylinders to the Parakku of Destinies.[43] This was a dark,

vaulted chamber, deep in the bowels of the earth. All the golden gods were now gathered there to receive their King, the supreme principle of their godhead. It was right, fair, and salutary that they should pay homage to him in the glory of his resurrection, and that they should ask him to aid them with his invincible strength in defeating the demons and evil spirits, and to give them for the coming year their small share in the destiny of Babylon. Marduk stated his conditions, as he had done in the first days of the Creation.

"If I, your avenger,
Must make you live,
Exalt and proclaim my destiny.
Let the word of my mouth, even as yours, establish destinies.
Let all that I do remain unchanged!"

At the blazing hour of noon the Kamah Gate, the principal gate of Esagila, opened.[44] The gigantic Marduk came out of the gloom of the sanctuary, and his golden raiment shone in the sunlight. Nebuchadnezzar stood in the shadow of his god. He had donned the ceremonial costume of the Kings of Chaldæa. The embroideries of his tunic were so crowded in their gorgeous variety that they seemed to form the very web of the material. The broad belt, which emphasized his waist, was adorned with festoons and lozenges, and two long daggers were thrust in it, their blades hidden in the voluminous folds of the pleated, tight-sleeved robe.[45] The priestly head-dress lay with all the weight of its tall cylindrical crown on the royal head, and the metal diadem which supported it was adorned with rosettes of precious stones and a frieze of winged horses posed stiffly before the Tree of Life. His feet were cased in soft gold tissue.[46]

Bowed with years, the aged Nergalorosor, the former Chief of the Magicians, walked behind his King, his ivory face showing up against the bold colouring of his long robe, and near him was his son Bel-shum-ishkun, the present Chief Magician and High Priest of

Marduk, towering in his tiara of emeralds and diamonds. The white-clad *kalus* beat their *lilissus* (kettle-drums), accompanying the *narus* as they sang the great hymn of gratitude to Marduk [47]:

"I will praise his godhead,
Proclaim his might,
Sing his strength,
Celebrate his valour!
Marduk the compassionate, the merciful,
To whom it is profitable to turn!
He it is who hearkens to my prayer,
Who grants the favours which appease the heart!"

The dense throng was cleft as if by magic, and the procession passed slowly through. It was hailed by an immense clamour. The wild noise of the cymbals was drowned by the din raised by a thousand voices, deep and shrill. The miracle was once more accomplished! Marduk had risen! The statues of the gods swayed above the seething mass of heads as if buffeted by the acclamations. They seemed to advance at the caprice of the surging of the crowd.

Nabu came first, on his gold waggon, escorted by the *urigallus*, and the crowd joyfully hailed the god who passed on the sceptre of the Kings of Babylon. The shouting suddenly grew louder, as Zarpanit came into view, "she who produces seed", carrying a child on her arm. She was surrounded by her eunuchs, her priestesses, and her harlots, the last singing, dancing, and playing softly on the flute, while their light garments gave off whiffs of scent which went to the heads of the onlookers. Ishtar-Babili, the Goddess of Battles, who led armies into combat, next heaved above the people, who hailed her with warlike shouts. She stood on a lion, armed with bow and quiver of arrows, and on her haughty head the tiara laden with sparkling jewels seemed light. A hymn of love and confidence went up to her who had made Babylon so triumph over her enemies.

Amid all that enthusiasm, in the dark angle of a low house, a group of Israelites, clad in long, shabby garments, stood mournfully, although their eyes shone. In their hearts Jehovah was always present. Their thoughts were far away from Ishtar, and turned to him; for their hope in him was sweeter in their poverty and humiliation than in wealth and success. In their abiding despair, one hope remained alive—that of rebuilding Jerusalem, the Holy City, that it might reign over the world by the mere radiation of its ideal.

All around the cymbals and the shouting raged like a storm. The gold statues went by interminably—Anu, Enlil, and Ea, fish-bodied and human-headed, the first divine triad [48]; Sin, the Moon-god, who measured time, with his long lapis-lazuli beard and the crescent on his brow [49]; Shamash, the Sun, the god of Sippar, the supreme judge, sitting on a golden throne, and his consort Gula [50]; Adar or Ninurta, "the god who lightens the nations like the sun", [51] the lord of the brave, the god of strength, the destroyer of enemies; and, lastly, Nergal, the latest comer, the god of Cuthah, "the great hero, the lord of battles", his frightful head rising arrogantly from a lion's body. The *shangus*, the *quaqurrus*, the makers of divine images, the *nuhatimmus*, who offered sacrifices, the *narus*, the humble ministers of the temples, formed the tail of each body which solemnly advanced, step by step, through the deliriously excited population, while the incense, mingling with the red dust, slowly rose into the stifling air and remained there, taking on the most fantastic shapes.

As the last god was coming out on to the Sacred Way, the head of the procession had already reached the Lady Gate, crossing the Libil-kheghalla Canal by a temporary bridge built by Nabopolassar, Nebuchadnezzar's father, who had also repaired the whole of that stretch of the Sacred Way. Beyond the gate, the Way

ran straight on between Nebuchadnezzar's superb lions, which seemed to escort the procession, towards the Temple of Bit-Akitu, standing stiff and square against the golden background of the sky.

Near the gate a group of Israelites stood round the prophets Ezekiel and Baruch, the latter of whom, the faithful disciple of Jeremiah, was newly arrived in Babylon. As the procession of golden gods went by, they said nothing, but their eyes shone with anger and also with cupidity, for their outraged piety contained an alloy of the love of wealth and luxury. Jehovah's promises of power and happiness, which they cherished in their exiled hearts, made them feel the ostentatious pride of the wicked gods all the more keenly. But Baruch answered their constant anxiety with a hope: "Now shall ye see in Babylon gods of silver, and of gold, and of wood, borne upon shoulders, which cause the nations to fear. Beware, therefore, that ye be in no wise afraid of them, when ye see the multitude before them, and behind them, worshipping them; but say ye in your hearts, 'O Lord, we must worship thee.' These gods cannot save themselves from rust and moths."[52] In his melancholy dark caftan, Ezekiel drew up his long form, thinned by privation. He did not raise his voice, for fear of attracting the attention of the crowd to his group of followers, but there was the fiery light of youth in his eye as he pointed a bony finger in scorn at the golden statues. On that day of pagan resurrection, the voice of Baruch had revived the soul of Israel; in the hearts of his fellow-countrymen, in spite of their wretched lot, faith had shed the priceless, inexhaustible manna of hope renewed.

The procession was still wending its slow way, making a glittering trail through the crowd. Before the third great gate, Babu-ellu, it halted by the Arakhtu Canal, on the bank of which a host of slaves and prisoners were busy completing and adorning the sanctuary which Nebuchadnezzar had ordered Labashi

the architect to build. With one voice, the people chanted the famous Litanies of Marduk of the Hundred Names,[53] and the hymn rose into the air with the incense, like the very breathing of the worshipping throng. The holy barge *Ma-Kua* lay on the calm water of the canal awaiting Marduk.[54] The sun flashed on the copper body and the two gold masts and the gems with which they were incrusted, making a blaze of harmonious colour. At the bow and stern serpents' heads rose stiff and proud.

On the further shore the procession was swallowed up in the light, mysterious shadow of cedars and tamarisks, as it made its way to the Temple of Bit-Akitu. The King conducted glorious Marduk into the precinct of the temple, a great extent of walls and terraces, covered with luxuriant vegetation. On every side running water-channels enlivened the stillness of that thirty-five-acre Eden, and fountains gushed in the shade of cedars, oaks, mimosas, and acacias.

In the light, now softening with the approach of evening, Nebuchadnezzar saw, above the temple-door, the gold and crimson leaves of which stood wide open, the great relief representing himself in the form of Marduk, felling Tiamat to the ground.[55] The night came on from every side of the horizon, and the day passed from one lovely colour to another and died on the threshold of the sanctuary. Night fell as the heavy doors of red and gold closed behind the King. The lesser clergy were crowded in the three rooms which preceded the great court, and between the three rows of tall square pillars under the vaults reaching away into the darkness the deep hum of their chanting was muffled by the thickness of the bricks. In a remote, walled-in apartment, feebly lit, the glorious mystery was accomplished. The King acted the part of Marduk. Gradually his eyes became used to the darkness, and he saw against the bare white walls all the golden gods, arrayed in order of battle, as in the sacred times.

He could see the awful face of Tiamat, and those of her children. He stepped forward and cut off their heads with a blow.

Outside, the priests announced the victory of Marduk,[56] and the crowd heard with rapture the triumphant verses of the Hymn of Victory, intoned by the clergy.

"Beloved, Prince, August Lord, Almighty,
Thou dost sustain all the inhabited earth!
Thou holdest the ends of the firmament!
Thou art a giant among the gods!"

In long, many-coloured files, the faithful advanced towards Nebuchadnezzar as he came out of the temple, and their gratitude broke out in songs of joy. Marduk had been brought back to life! The King had restored to them the god of their fathers, the protector of their city. The procession formed up again by the light of torches, and wound, in fire and gold, in and out among domes, gardens, and terraces.

This time, when the procession came out on the Sacred Way, it was not met with silent expectation; the multitude, heaped below the high walls, shouted and screamed. The secular feast associated itself with the mystical. It was the voice of mundane aspirations which was now heard in the songs and cries which greeted the procession on its return to Esagila, where victorious Marduk would establish the destinies of the Empire for the new year.

It was dark in the Parakku of Destinies[57] in the Du-azag or Ekua of Marduk, but a single torch raised a thousand reflexions in the gold roof, under which the thirty-five gods stood arrayed. The priests who personified them stood hid in their shadow and addressed the resuscitated god with the salutation which confirmed his divine pre-eminence:

"Thou art regarded as one of the Great Gods.
Thy destiny hath no equal.
Henceforth, thy word cannot be turned aside.
To exalt and to abase, such will be thy power.
Marduk is again consecrated King of the Gods."[58]

With the new day the city was lifted up with pride. Anxieties had fled with the wicked gods whom Marduk had driven away. On every side, in the clear morning light, there was a fresh feeling of happiness recovered and life made young again. Every man was ready to take up his life of toil, for hope had returned to every heart.

At the dawn of the twelfth day, the day of the Zagmuku, Marduk, to confirm the glorious destiny promised to Babylon,[59] had to join in mystical union with Zarpanit, and by that divine union all who were true to the worship of their gods would enjoy fertility and love. The day was still silent under a colourless sky, which seemed too large. Marduk came out of Esagila, conducted by Nebuchadnezzar, and they went in silence, by the Terrace of Ishtar and Zamama, to the House of the Bed [60] in Etemenanki. In mystery, as the texts tell us, Zarpanit came to meet her husband. She lay down on a couch, in a quiet, dark place, and awaited her god. Then blessings were shed on Babylon.

"The night has fled; it is day.
Shamash, the Sun of Babylon, rises over the earth." [61]

In his palace above the city Nebuchadnezzar fell asleep happy. With Marduk he had established the successful destiny of the Empire for another year. The country would be filled with fertility and wealth, and the hearts of the Babylonians would be filled with happiness. For another year the gods had returned to their motionless watch over the desires and prayers of men. In the city there was an outburst of joy, profound, unrestrained, frantic, and the festival became a wild dance of pleasure in every quarter of the town at once. In that supreme rapture, in which the whole population joined, from the poorest to the wealthiest, it would be hard to say how much was due to mystical aspiration and how much to a desire for

excitement; both were an escape from the toil and worries of ordinary life.

Drums and cymbals thundered and clashed. Smells of cooking and sweat mingled with the perfumes and the incense. All the elegant youth of the city, "all of them princes to look upon", were out in search of pleasure. They wore [62] red woollen caftans over the garments of white linen which reached to their feet. Their hair fell in carefully curled and highly scented ringlets under their tall, pointed hats of felt. Attached to their golden necklaces, they wore cylinders, on which the figure of the god to whom they especially committed their welfare was carved on an onyx in a circle of emeralds and brilliants. They scornfully pushed the mob aside with their long sticks, and, talking and laughing as they went, made for Cuthah, where the Bride Fair was held.[63] This fair was a survival of an old custom of the country; every year the marriageable girls of Babylon and the surrounding towns who had in the last year sacrificed their virginity to Ishtar were collected there.

The public gathered in the palm-grove consisted of prospective bidders and idlers. All crowded against the ropes which had been stretched in front of the girls and exchanged chaff until the auction should begin. In the middle of their banter their voices were shaken by a sudden flutter of excitement; a public crier had ascended a small brick platform and was calling the most beautiful of all the brides, Hamma of Cuthah.

She stood up, and lazily walked along the whole length of the ropes, offering herself in the glory of her youthful beauty to the inquisitive eyes of all those men. Her grace and refinement justified the amount of the reserve-price which the auctioneer announced in a piercing voice—three minas of silver. The plain girls, who could not hope for a husband unless they had a dowry, were glad that such a beauty as Hamma should

HAMMURABI, KING OF BABYLON

British Museum relief No. 22454. From King. By courtesy of Messrs. Chatto and Windus

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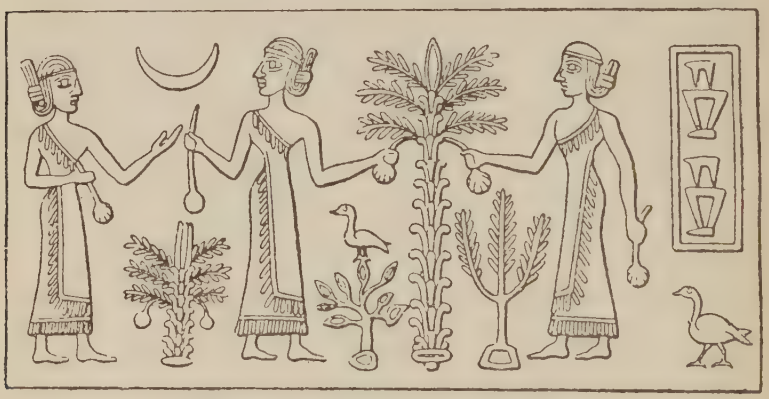
be put up for sale, since she would fetch a price the proceeds of which would enable them to get married.

Balatsu, a wealthy Babylonian merchant,[64] lifted his hand to show that he would pay the price. His face was red with confusion or love, and the facetious congratulations which he received added to his embarrassment. Hamma modestly lowered her eyes, sure as she now was of her future as the wife of the fat parvenu, who was unlikely to be able to deny anything to one endowed with her charms. Besides, the Code of Hammurabi provided guarantees and rights, of which she would make good use in order to ensure her independence. Her landed property would remain her own, and she would leave it to her children, without Balatsu being able to say a word. Balatsu was rich and his affairs were doing well; so there was no fear of his placing her with a creditor as a slave for three years, as the law allowed him to do. From his colour, he must be healthy; so there was little fear of her being childless, and so liable to repudiation on payment of half a mina. She was sure enough of her charms to think it unlikely that Balatsu would take the second wife allowed by the law. If he did, the Code would not allow her rival to pretend to an equality with herself; and what was more, she would take care that the contract of any second marriage contained a clause requiring the second wife to wash the feet of the first and to carry her chair to the Temple of Marduk.[65]

Besides, Balatsu, though unmannerly and boorish, was not repulsive. She could do her duty as a wife. And if she refused, the law was not so cruel as it used to be[66]; she would not be drowned, but would simply return to her father's house. She would not be divorced, or kept in her husband's house as a slave, unless she showed herself a bad housekeeper. Even if, by any chance, she should deceive her husband for the sake of some one younger and more attractive, she had a thousand arts and deceptions and coquetries by

which she might save herself from the penalty with which the Code visited adulterers—to be tied together and thrown into the muddy waters of the Euphrates.[67]

So Hamma smiled on Balatsu, confident of her future dominion over the fat merchant, in whose eyes she already saw how completely she had captivated him. She was even ready to hasten on the marriage, and to fix the last day of the month of Shebat for the ceremony. The date, with her name and her husband's, would be inscribed on a clay olive which Balatsu would give her,



GATHERING THE FRUIT OF THE MALE PALM.
Cylinder in the Hague Museum, from Maspero.

and which she would wear at her neck as her marriage-lines.[68]

The fair Hamma disappeared on the arm of Balatsu [69] among the palm-groves over which lay the huge blurred shadow of the city, and on the auction-mart, amid the cheerful discordance of chatter, laughing, and singing, the auctioneer presented Mannutama. She, too, was pretty, with large brown eyes under lashes which hung over her cheeks. With her Binit-Nisukin was put up, and arrogantly displayed her charms. Two rich nobles, Bakit-Alsi and Hakan, bid against one another.[70] Their wealth made marriage an easy matter for them, and the number of their wives and

concubines would be evidence of their social position and success in business. Moreover, under the Code they could always repudiate a wife for half a mina, and even that was necessary only if they could not accuse the wife of any fault.

The auctioneer continued, and the girls appeared in succession behind the ropes. Some of them did a few steps of a dance, singing in the high, squeaky voices of children. Presently there was no one left on the other side of the ropes but common young men of slender means. Halalat was put up. Wearing a long red caftan in an attempt to hide her limp, the poor creature hoped that the dowry which she would get out of the sale of Hamma would attract a few bids. A master-brickmaker, Marmarih by name, came up, and scanned her with a look of greed and cruelty. He inquired about the dowry, and accepted the deal. Halalat followed him, trembling. Her prospects of happiness were doubtful.

The bidding gradually died down, and the bright nosegay of girls had lost its flowers one by one. Nabu-akhe-iddin came up to the ropes. He was a very wealthy Babylonian, who had gone into partnership with one Kalba, the proprietor of a disreputable drink-shop, to whom he supplied slaves, male and female, for immoral purposes, in return for three-quarters of the receipts.[71] The auctioneer, who had known him a long time, asked him whether he had authority from his lawful wife to buy a second one. Nabu-akhe-iddin produced not only this authority, but commissions from three other rich merchants to choose three girls at the Bride Fair to be their second wives; and, having made his choice on the best possible terms, he marched the four women away without further trouble.

Night had fallen. The moon rose high in the sky and its cold light fell on the despairing forms of the women who were still left with the now voiceless auctioneer. Babylon was falling asleep in the moonlight,

worn out by its nine days of festivity. In the lower quarters, the harlots, " the daughters of sweetness ", with their girdles of string round their waists,[72] sat on their doorsteps, burning olive-stones to their gods on braziers,[73] and watched for young noblemen returning from the Bride Fair. From their necks hung Aban-la-erie, the Stone of Non-conception, the harlots' stone,[74] on their scarcely veiled bosoms.

One of them pointed to a blushing youth, and said to her neighbour, " See him ! Behold his face ! He shines with nobility, he is mighty, all his body breathes delight ! "

Flattered, the youth went up to them, stammering, " They are filled with delight. They are full of joy." [75]

With modest grace, the woman spoke in a caressing voice to the vanity which she knew she could bend to her will if she flattered it sufficiently : " Thou art fair, thou art like a god. Why dost thou run ? "

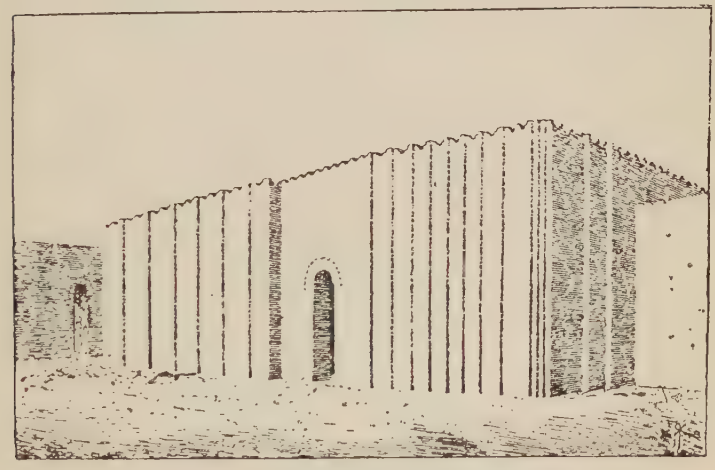
He bridled with satisfaction as he answered : " Thy words are pleasant. Come, harlot, take me with thee." [76]

Leaving his boon companions, he took hold of the end of the string tied round her long robe, and dragged her through a deserted alley to a grove of mastics,[77] while she, proud of her conquest, jeered at those who had not been judged worthy to have their girdle broken that evening.[78]

Meanwhile, the sacrificial tables in the courts of Esagila were laden with victims. The great golden Marduk, now embodying the power and glory of Babylon for another year, had returned to his everlasting Ezida. As the priests slew the bulls, heifers, and lambs with their gold knives, the thick blood filled the gutters to overflowing, and spread a red carpet over the flagstones.[79]

The aristocratic quarter of Merkes [80] lay near the King's Palace, a world apart, shut off from the paupers

and harlots and vermin of the rest of the city by a screen of walls. Here were wide spaces and palaces and wealthy houses hidden in greenery. The streets did not zigzag about according to the chances of time or the caprice of builders [81]; Hammurabi, that lover of order, had been very particular about the lay-out of this fashionable quarter, and the streets, though not paved,[82] were the first straight streets ever made in a city. They all ran parallel, joining the Sacred Way at right angles. In all times, under Hammurabi, under



Restoration of the Great House in Merkes.
From Koldewey.

Samsu-iluna, under Ammi-ditana, the representatives of the old Chaldæan aristocracy and the rich parvenus had had or had aspired to have their house in this Mayfair of Babylon.

The palace of Neriglissar dominated the quarter, heavily opulent. It stood on a wide terrace, five feet above the level of the street; it is now known as the Great House of Merkes. Under the flooring [83] we can see the ruins of earlier dwellings, the antiquity of which is attested by bricks bearing the names of Kadashman-Turgu and Kurigalzu. The great outer wall which

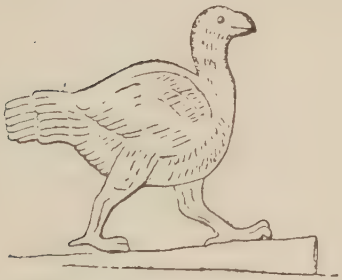
enclosed the buildings round the three courts was bare, with notches along the top. Only the area of the ground which it enclosed suggested the wealth and power which lay within.

On this evening many groups of people crowded round the outer door. It, too, was perfectly flat, without even a frame of enamelled bricks or the usual arrangement of towers and steps to dignify it.[84] The guests were received by eunuchs, who stood or squatted in this doorway. With big eyes goggling in their fat brown faces, they examined the small cylinders on which the letters of invitation were inscribed. "By Inanna and Amal, by the life of the King and the life of the Queen, may you swear that if you have not seen my eyes, you shall have neither meat nor drink, and if you have not spoken to me, you shall not sit on a chair."[85] Passing on their right a great ante-chamber which led to the private apartments of the master of the house, the guests went through a very long corridor with bare white walls, unbroken save where a warm note was given by the double leaves of a high door, the wood of which had the patina of age. A large waiting-room[86] gave on to the great inner court, where the light of torches held by slaves revealed friezes of small enamelled bricks in the form of rosettes, stars, and bunches of flowers.

On one side of the court was the banqueting-hall, full of light, measuring fifty feet by twenty-six.[87] The walls were hung, to the height of a man, with the finest carpets of Babylon, and others, still more gorgeous, lay on the ground. The family sat up on high chairs with backs at the end of the room. Right and left of them, servants waved fly-flappers, and the guests sat at innumerable small tables in front. The women, "the daughters of the Chaldæans, tender and delicate, given to pleasures, dwelling carelessly",[88] wore long robes of transparent red muslin which made the most of their charms. The Indian dogs, which were kept in every

well-to-do house, wandered about among the tables; they were queer figures, with long tails curling round like French horns and tiny perked-up ears. There were as many servants as in the Palace of the King.

The buzz of conversation soon became loud. "The relaxation of manners is conspicuous in the mixing of the sexes, and there is no sign of the reserve which



BABYLONIAN HOUSEHOLD ANIMALS.
From Rawlinson.

reigns in the harems of the East." [89] At some of the tables the curled and scented youths whose sceptical chaff had enlivened the Bride Market were gathered. They had dressed with a magnificence suitable to the occasion; over their robes of gorgeous embroidery, necklaces, bangles, belts, and pendants flashed a thousand colours; rouge had given a semblance of youthful health to their pasty, dissipated faces; they

had dyed their hair, like women, and like women they wore huge ear-rings. They ate, drank, sang and shouted, keeping their factitious gaiety going with scoffing and backbiting. Between bumpers, they would call to one of their number who remained sober and taciturn. They chanted for his benefit, in allusion to an unfortunate love-affair, the classical proverb, " Thou didst go and take the enemy's field ; but the enemy came and took thine." [90] Then, when their victim took their wit in ill part, they offered the consolation of their philosophy, " The friendship of a day is bondage for eternity." [91] All in vain. Finally, they tried to draw his attention to a table at which sat some young women who, in accordance with Babylonian custom, " had behaved well at the beginning of dinner, and had then shed their garments, one by one, with each course, until they had come to the most intimate portions of their clothing ". But the slighted one found no consolation for his mortification there. He was disgusted with the debauchery of the age. In Babylon these outrageous manners were no longer confined to the courtesans ; matrons and young girls considered it " a gracious act to reveal their bodies to all comers ", and " fathers and husbands placed their womenfolk at the complete disposal of their guests, provided that the latter paid them well ".[92]

At a neighbouring table magistrates were discussing, with a gravity to which frequent potations lent a certain heat, the latest scandal of the law-courts.[93] A young man of good family had been given as a pledge, to pay the discreditable debts of his father, and had only just succeeded in obtaining his legal emancipation after many years of slavery.

Round another table soldiers were making a great noise, uproariously congratulating, with many oaths and slaps on the back, an old general with a smiling face and a reddening nose. Like every good Babylonian husband, who would not divorce his wife on

the ground of barrenness, he had that very morning remedied the deficiency by adopting a son, and the future of his line was ensured. He had turned to a hard-up friend of his, who had a large family, and the latter had made over his youngest son in return for a financial consideration. Two magistrates had branded the soles of the boy's feet with an iron in the presence of witnesses. After that formality, the adopted son had been entered in the family archives.[94] Many toasts were drunk this night to the old general and his youthful pride in his paternity.

As the fumes of drink mounted, the banquet degenerated into an orgy. There was an undescribable confusion of indecent gestures, shouts, singing, the clatter of plate, and the sound of goblets clanged together prior to being drained. Musicians kept up an unwearied flow of shrill, jerky music. The drinks in the fat jars rapidly diminished, and were steadily replenished by a multitude of slaves.

Near the door one or two old men who had made their fortune in the caravan-trade were talking gloatingly of the beauty of the Jewish women, whose adventures were the talk of the town. One must be careful of them, for appearances were deceptive, and some of them were virtuous, like Susanna, the daughter of Chelcias and wife of Joacim, who was the theme of the good story of the moment. She was seen in the bath by two elderly men, important officials of the kingdom, who made no secret of the effect which her charms had on them. When she would have nothing to do with them, they did not scruple to make use of their influence to have her condemned to be stoned to death, on the ground of adultery with a young nobleman. But a young Jew had a bright idea for saving her. He summoned the two old men before the assembled people, and interrogated them separately. Of the first, he asked: "Now, then, if thou hast seen her, tell me, under what tree sawest thou them companying

together?" "Under a mastic-tree," was the answer. Then the second, when the same question was put to him, said, "Under a holm-tree."[95] So the people, convinced by this contradiction of the innocence of Susanna and the wickedness of the two old men, stoned them instead of her.

The youth and fashion gradually left the banqueting-hall. The chill of the morning fell on their excitement like an icy douche. They huskily sang their filthy choruses in the street, and the cocks answered them in the tender light of the dawn. Two scribes came up mysteriously to the group of revellers, each wagging the seal which he wore at his neck.[96] The seal of Luhibni, a women's scribe, consisted of an onyx, engraved with two naked figures of women, one dancing beneath a whip. Attracted by the advertisement, some of the young men followed him. The others gathered round the *dupsharru* Eniggal, the steward of a brothel, who hardly dared to show his seal. He was content with explaining the double meaning of the inscriptions which adorned the rooms to which he led them through a maze of squalid back-streets. Making way for them on the threshold, he murmured his welcome: "In this place of pleasure, let the heart of man be contained, favourable to the house of the flesh."[97]

Gradually the sounds of revelry abated. Temples, palaces, stairs, and ramparts became clear against the pallor of the sky. Beyond the city, by the Chebar, while the rosy light spread, the house of the prophet Ezekiel, a small patch of white lost among green willows and sycamores, was already calling to prayer the tribes of Israelites who dwelt near by. A circle of dim, ghostly figures formed. Men and women sang in unison, to the sound of harps:

"By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept, when we remembered thee, O Zion.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.
If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.
O daughter of Babylon, wasted with misery, yea, happy shall he be, that rewardeth thee as thou hast served us!" [98]

In the temple of Marduk the priests still sat with their feet in the blood of the sacrifices and their bellies against the little tables with lions' legs, guzzling and swilling and calling down the first blessing of their god on Babylon and on the New Year.[99]

NOTES ON CHAPTER SEVEN

[1] The best account of this mystical and philosophic ceremony is given by Pallis in his *The Babylonian Akitu Festival.* I have used it for my reconstruction of the feast.

[2] "Akitu" comes from Aku, one of the many epithets of the Moon-god. Hommel thinks that the Gate of Aku in Babylon gave access to the Akitu. Pallis, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15, gives suggestions by Jensen, Delitzsch, Streck, and Haupt. Haupt compares Akitu with *ittika* (sitting down) and *muttaka* (banquet). Delitzsch finally adopted the translation *Festmahl.* The word Akitu appears in Sumerian texts; long before Babylon, a feast of Akiti is mentioned, Akiti meaning "festival".

All the cities of the kingdom, from the third millennium, according to the Sumerian sources, down to Nabonidus, give accounts of these ceremonies—Babylon, Dilbat, Harran, Milkia, Nineveh, Erech. The feast was held in the month of Nisan, according to the Annals of Sargon and Nabonidus. The most complete ritual-books of the New Year's festival are from Erech (Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*) and Babylon (Pallis).

[3] Shamash-shum-ukin (668–648) restored them (Maspero, vol. iii, p. 423).

[4] Pallis, p. 140. Every leader of peoples in Babylonia went annually to Babylon to celebrate this festival, including the Assyrian conquerors. Sargon shows clearly that it was an established custom. The greatest of all, Nebuchadnezzar, says in his inscriptions that, in whatever part of Mesopotamia his predecessors might have had their capital or palace, they always came once a year to Babylon to celebrate the feast of Marduk. It was held in the other cities too, and the King sent a substitute, a *guzippu*, who wore the royal robes and took the part of the King in the ceremony.

[5] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels.* See all "La Fête du Nouvel An à Babylone", p. 127, to which all my notes on the ritual of the feast refer. Unfortunately, the book of ritual discovered by Thureau-Dangin stops at the fifth day of the feast, but it has been possible to reconstruct the end from newly-discovered texts, interpreted by Pallis, *op. cit.*

[6] Thureau-Dangin, pp. 129–30.

[7] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 150: "The magicians made the gods propitious and drove away demons." These were the *mashmashus*.

[8] *Ibid.*

[9] Thureau-Dangin, pp. 132–3; Delaporte, p. 164.

[10] Scheil, "Le Marché aux poissons de Larsa", in *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 1918.

[11] *Ibid.*

[12] *Ibid.* (letter from King Samsu-iluna to the court of Kar-Sippar and the judge of Sippar).

[13] A triangular fish. In the same tablet about the Larsa fish-market we find the *ha-se-ha* or goose-fish, a kind of dolphin, sold at the modest price of 240 for a shekel of silver, and the *absuhur-ha* or horned ray, the cow-fish, at the same price.

[14] David, "Une Opération dentaire en Babylonie", in *Revue d'Assyr.*, xxv (1928), No. 11, p. 95. We possess few documents on operative medicine in Babylonia. One of the most recent is the British Museum incantation (55, 547–CT–xvii, 50) known as the Legend of the Worm, which has been discussed at length by Meissner. "Plunging the needle into the hollow tooth, seize the foot of the worm and say these words while pulling out the worm." The Babylonians regarded the nerve as a little worm which crept into the tooth. At the part of the tooth nearest the gum, where caries is most frequent, the pain caused by the removal of the nerve was attributed to the desperate efforts of the worm as it clung with its teeth to the roots of the human tooth when the operator caught it by the foot, i.e. the upper end, in order to draw it from the hollow of the tooth.

[15] See previous note.

[16] *Ibid.*

[17] Hdt., i, 197.

[18] Fossey, *Magie assyrienne*; Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 253.

[19] The whole population took part in the Akitu festival. This is plain from the ritual texts from Erech, which, as has been said, give the end of the festival, whereas that of Babylon stops at the fifth day. "In Babylon, the people were assembled in the court of Esagila during the sacred rites." In brief, this twelve-days' feast comprised: a liturgical ritual (which has come down to us in part); a dramatic performance; and a mythological ritual, which gave the religious interpretation of each action in the drama. These two last rituals have come to us in a very imperfect condition. Ebeling and Zimmern have translated it as well as possible, but, while we can understand the general idea of the ceremony, we cannot reconstruct it exactly.

[20] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*, p. 136.

[21] At this moment, the ceremony broke into two parts, which went on at the same time. We know only the ritual part (see n. 19 above).

Zimmern was the first to draw attention to the analogies between these ceremonies and the Gospel story. Hugo Radau, in his book, *Bel, the Christ of Ancient Times*, established the similarity between the Babylonian religion and the Christian doctrine of the death and resurrection of Christ.

Zimmern sets out to establish a complete parallel between Jesus and Marduk, calling in other divine and even human personages where Marduk does not offer enough points of resemblance.

Jesus is the Logos, the son of God who created the world, the redeemer of men. Marduk is the wise son of Ea, the creator of the world, and is, above all, the god who delivers men from sickness, pain, and sin. Jesus is the suffering Messiah, who died, descended into the Underworld, and rose again. In this he corresponds to the periodical disappearance and reappearance of the Babylonian star-deities, Sin, Shamash, Ishtar, Nergal, Tammuz. Jesus, ascending to heaven and sitting at the right hand of God, is called Lord of Lords, King of Kings. Marduk is described in the same terms. At the end of time, Christ will come and fight a last battle with the powers of evil. So Marduk fights the dragon.

Hehn has pointed out a number of similarities of the same kind.

These parallels are not very far-reaching, and prove no more than those which might be established between Jesus and the saviour gods of other peoples. The resemblances are, on the whole, very general; they do not go beyond what one might expect of similar parallels, and do not give one any right to infer that in drawing the portrait of Christ the Evangelists were in the least subject to Babylonian influence, even unconsciously.

In 1918, Zimmern believed that he had found further supporting details in new Babylonian texts (*Vat.* 9555 and 9538), published by Ebeling. These two documents appear to be a kind of commentary on various ceremonies of the New Year festival. The explanations given are not always clear, and are set forth without any logical connexion. Nevertheless, Zimmern regards them as a pendant to the story of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus. His views are briefly as follows: Bel-Marduk is taken prisoner and interrogated in a house on a mountain-side (the arrest of Jesus and His examination before the High Priest and Pilate). He is struck (the flagellation of Christ) and taken up on to the mountain (Calvary) with a criminal who is put to death (the two thieves), while another accused

man is set free (Barabbas). When Bel has arrived on the mountain, a revolt breaks out in the city (the earthquake and other portents at the death of Jesus). His garments are taken away (the parting of the raiment of Jesus). A woman (wipes) the blood which flows from the heart (of Bel?), doubtless from a wound (the piercing with the spear). Bel goes down into the mountain, far from the light and life, and is there kept captive (the burial of Jesus and His descent among the dead). The fortress in which Bel is kept is watched by warders (the keepers at the sepulchre of Christ). A goddess laments over Bel (Mary Magdalene and the other Mary). A search is made for Bel, and a mourning woman, his wife, seeks him near the Door of the Sepulchre (the Holy Women seeking Jesus at the door of the Sepulchre and Mary Magdalene weeping before the empty tomb). Bel is restored to life and comes out of the mountain, like the sun in spring, and the New Year festival, held in Nisan at the spring equinox, is at the same time the feast of his victory over the powers of darkness (the resurrection of Jesus, Who comes out of the tomb on a *Sun*-day, and His feast at the spring equinox, which is also the festival of His victory over the powers of darkness).

Presented like this, the parallels are most impressive, but, carefully as I have read the two texts, *Vat.* 9555 and 9538, even with the aid of Zimmern's translation, in which some of the lacunæ of the original are ingeniously filled, I cannot find all these marvels in them. The following extract will give an idea of the form and content of the fragment. The words restored by Zimmern are in brackets):

1. (. . . it is Bel, when in the mountain he was kept.)
2. . . .
3. (. . . made him come out.)
4. . . . goes about a (messen)ger of his fathers, (crying,) "Who hath made him (come out)?"
5. (. . . who went,) made him come out.
6. (. . . who journeys;) it is when to the "mountain" he comes.
7. (. . . where) he comes, (it is in the house on the side of the "mountain" that they question him).
8. (Nabu who from Borsippa comes; it is when he comes to get news of his father who is captive.)
9. The . . . who go about in the streets; (it is) when they seek for Bel. "Where is he captive?"
10. (The . . .) whose hands are stretched out; (it is when she supplicates Sin and Shamash, "Make Bel to live again!")
11. (The door) of the . . . where she comes, is the door of the Sepulchre; she comes, she (seeks him).

12. (The) . . . twain who stand at the (door) of Esagila, they are the keepers; they are set over him, they (watch him).

13. (The . . . which) are done; (it is) after the gods have shut him in, he vanished from (life);

14. (In pri)son, far from the su(n) and the light they made (him) go down.

15. (The . . .) that under him approach, with which he is clad; they are the wounds which he has suffered; in his blood. . . .

And so on.

In these lines Zimmern finds the arrest of Bel, his trial, his burial, the search after him, etc. Until we have in a more complete form the original liturgical text (for the Assyrian or Babylonian author is merely commenting on a certain number of phrases detached from their context), we should at least maintain a cautious reserve, instead of leaping at conclusions which have insufficient foundation and owe more to imagination than to true scientific research.

[22] Pallis, pp. 221 ff.

[23] Pallis, pp. 223 ff.

[24] "How and by whom was the dead Marduk represented during the ritual of death?" Pallis asks. He goes on to say that we do not know. Probably a dummy was used, as in other Asiatic cults. The other parts were taken by priests and priestesses. In the drama, in the final battle, the King was identified with Marduk. According to Pallis, the worship and the myth do not seem to be identical, but he remarks that the text of the descriptions is so short that one can say nothing for certain. But the two were fairly closely connected, even if the dramatic text was different from that of the worship. See also Pallis, p. 265.

[25] See Pallis, pp. 222 ff.

[26] *Ibid.*, p. 236.

[27] The Poem of the Creation is written in seven tablets, one for each day. The tablets were discovered in the British excavations of Kuyunjik in 1854. They formed part of the library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh (668–626). All bear the words, "According to the ancient copy." The Chaldæan priests made a compilation of all religious legends earlier than the time of Hammurabi (2050 B.C.).

[28] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, pp. 1, 55 (the Poem of the Creation).

[29] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

[30] *Ibid.*, Third Tablet, p. 41.

[31] *Ibid.*, Fourth Tablet, p. 43.

[32] *Ibid.*, Fourth Tablet, pp. 55–7.

[33] *Ibid.*, Fifth Tablet, pp. 59–61.

[34] *Ibid.*, Sixth Tablet, pp. 65–7.

[35] *Ibid.*, Seventh Tablet, pp. 77–81.

[36] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels accadiens*, " La Fête du Nouvel An à Babylone ", pp. 140–1. " All the door-leaves of the sanctuary with oil of cedar he will touch. He will call a sword-bearer, who will cut off the head of a sheep, and then he will rub the temple with the carcass. The enchanter and the sword-bearer will go out into the country." Three and a half hours after sunrise, the *urigallu* calls all the craftsmen. " The golden heaven of the sanctuary of Marduk they will bring out, and then Ezida, the sanctuary of Nebuchadnezzar, from top to foundations they will cover. O great demon, may Bel annihilate thee ! "

[37] Pallis, pp. 120–31 ; Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 164–7.

[38] Wadi Brissa Inscriptions, col. vii (21). " The Sacred Barge of the Ganul Canal, his radiant vessel, I honoured and caused to be built. The canopy of oak and the two masts of great poles of oak, I clad with shining gold and my fingers prepared them. In the time of Zagmuku, at the New Year, for the Feast of the Akitu of the divine King of the Gods, Marduk, Nabu, the heroic and faithful son, came out of Borsippa to Babylon in the barge on the Ganul River, which was beautified with riches and filled with a shining canopy and two masts, for the adoration of all the world. What no previous king had done, for Nebuchadnezzar my Lord I did magnificently. From Ishtar-Sakipat-Tebisu to the shining Gate of Ishtar-Dannal-Sabesu, a broad street in the name of the great Lord Marduk ; from the Kibsu-nakar Gate to the entrance of Nabu-Esagil, called Nabu-Dajan-Nise-su, a broad street in the name of the heroic son Nabu, I filled with a high terrace and garnished with mortar and bricks."

[39] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels*, pp. 142–3.

[40] Pallis, pp. 131–9. At Ashur the texts mention twenty-five gods thus coming to take part in the ceremony. The chief of them, whom I mention here, all had their own chapel or *papahani* in the great temple of Esagila.

[41] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels*, p. 145. " The *urigallu* relieved the prince of his royal insignia, the sceptre, the circle, the toothed sickle (the *harpe*), and the tiara, and went to deposit them on a seat before the image of Marduk. He then returned to the prince, smote him on the cheek, conducted him into the presence of the god, pulled his ears, and made him kneel down. Then the King recited a negative confession, ' I have not sinned ', etc. . . . The insignia were once more restored to him. Once more the *urigallu* smote him on the cheek " (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 165–6).

[42] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels*, pp. 146–7.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 147. This Parakku was the sanctuary of Nabu in Esagila.

[44] In all the cities of Chaldæa, since long before 2000 B.C., a similar ceremony had been held, not only for Marduk, who did not become a national god until after 2000, but, e.g., for Anu at Erech, Enlil and Ninurta at Nippur, and Ea at Eridu. This ceremony, without which the year could not begin, thus took its full symbolic character in associating the local god with the destinies of his city.

[45] The traditional costume of the Chaldæan kings, taken from the figure of Marduk-nadin-akhe on a black diorite stele, now in the British Museum (1120 B.C.).

[46] See n. 45.

[47] Hymn of thanksgiving to Marduk (for the procession) (*Dictionnaire de la Bible*, col. 824; Hehn, *Hymnen und Gebete an Marduk*, No. 4).

[48] Ea was depicted with a man's feet and a fish's tail. At the beginning of the world, he spent his days among men, teaching them civilization, and at sunset he returned into the sea for the night.

[49] The Babylonians readily did obeisance to Sin, for it was his function to cause the days, the months, and the years of wicked kings to end in sighs or tears.

[50] An old goddess whose statue was carried off from Erech by the Elamite conqueror Kudur-Nankhundi and recovered at Susa by Ashurbanipal. The rape of the statue of Nana-Gula was regarded as a very great political event. Eight hundred years later, St. Melito, in an *Apologia* addressed to Marcus Aurelius, wrote a legend of the captivity of the goddess.

[51] According to Berosus, he was the Assyrian Heracles, the terrible god of the brave, the lord of strength, the destroyer of enemies, the subduer of the disobedient, the exterminator of rebels, the Lord of Iron. We see him among the colossal statues in the Louvre, a frightful-looking god crushing a very small lion in his arms. He always has a globe on his head.

[52] Baruch, vi, 4–6, 12.

[53] Pallis, p. 71.

[54] "As for the barge *Ma-Kua*, the vessel (of the temple of Esagila), I lined her ends, fore and aft, her utensils, and her copper sides, two-headed, shining. With *nisikti* stones I made her brightness to radiate like the sparkling stars on the shining River Euphrates, and for all men to see I filled her with riches at the time of Zagmuku at the beginning of the year. I set Marduk, Lord of the Gods, in wings, at the great festival, his splendid Akitu, I made him to be borne on a carriage. In *Ma-*

Kua, the shining barge of Marduk, I set the masts with magnificence" (Wadi Brissa inscription, given in full in Langdon, *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, p. 163).

[55] Pallis (p. 115) writes to the following effect: There were Bit-Akitu temples in all the big cities, for this festival of the New Year was celebrated everywhere. The Bit-Akitu of Sennacherib has been found at Ashur. The building breaks away from all Assyrian traditions; it is constructed of large blocks of stone instead of brick. The plan is square, and it stood in the middle of a garden of 40 acres, covered with channels by which water was conveyed to large trees. This is the only Bit-Akitu found in Assyria, and no other garden of the kind is known.

The building consisted of three apartments giving on to a large hall and containing three rows of pillars; the Bit-Akitu was behind, and the temple somewhat lower. Sennacherib introduced no innovations; he merely reproduced the tradition of the Bit-Akitus of Ashurbanipal.

[56] Pallis, p. 265. Texts K 3476 and *Vat.* 9555 give us some glimpses of the symbolic battle enacted in the Bit-Akitu, in which the King acted as Marduk (p. 257). Pallis thinks that the battle in the drama of the Creation was of a less theatrical nature than the drama of the death. Pinches published a text in eight tablets in 1908.

[57] See Pallis, pp. 92–100.

[58] Poem of the Creation, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 43.

[59] Thureau-Dangin, *Rituels*, p. 148; Pallis, p. 197.

[60] The Smith Tablet (col. vi) gives the names of the sanctuaries of the tower (Etemenanki) and (col. vii) the dependent buildings ("the House of the East, the Tu-um, the House of the Net") and at the back, opposite the Door of Utensils, the House of the Bed. See also Pallis, pp. 108 ff.

[61] Radau (*Bel, the Christ of Ancient Times*) states that several inscriptions of Gudea, the patesi of Lagash, speak of a "wedding" between Ningirsu, the god of rain, thunders, and lightnings, and Bau, who had the power to raise the dead. The marriage was celebrated on the day of the year known as the Feast of Bau. It symbolized the fructification of the earth by the rain, by which the earth becomes full of sap and brings a new life. In the time before spring, the earth and Ningirsu are alike fruitless and dead; now, this time is the winter, when the god and the earth are in the tomb.

We now understand why Gudea says that he has made a *gigunu* of cedar in the temple of Eninnu in honour of Ningirsu. In this case *gigunu*, like *ekur* and *arallu*, means "Place of Darkness". In winter, Ningirsu, the god of thunder and lightning, lies dead in the *gigunu*, and in the spring he comes to life, as is

shown by the first storms. At once he marries Bau, that is, the warm rains of spring unite with the earth for the rebirth of nature. The year began in spring, and this marriage marked a resurrection.

Ningirsu and Ninurta were the gods of vegetation. Ningirsu was the prime minister of the god Enlil, like Ninurta. When Marduk displaced Enlil and his prime minister, Marduk became the god who was born again. His wife was Zarpanit, " she who shines like silver ". She was called Zer-banitu, " she who creates, produces, seed ", since the spring festival of the resurrection of nature which in Gudea's time had been symbolized by the marriage of Ningirsu and Bau, was transformed into the marriage of Marduk and Zarpanit during the Zagmuku. Nature could not produce corn until Marduk and Zarpanit were married.

[62] Hdt., i, 195.

[63] Hdt., i, 196. " In every town ", he says, " those who had marriageable daughters used to bring them once a year to a place where a great number of men gathered round them. A public crier made them stand up and sold them all, one after another. He began with the most beautiful, and having got a large sum for her he put up the second fairest. But he only sold them on condition that the buyers married them. . . . This very wise custom no longer exists," he goes on. " Since Babylon was taken, and the Babylonians fell on evil days and lost all their goods, every man of the people in his poverty prostitutes his daughters for money." It is therefore supposed that the law must have been in force until the capture of Babylon by Cyrus.

[64] Contract of the time of Nebuchadnezzar in Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 83.

[65] Contract in Delaporte, p. 77.

[66] See Delaporte, *op. cit.*, " The Family ", pp. 74–89.

[67] *Ibid.*, p. 78.

[68] On the many olives in the Louvre we find such inscriptions as, " Mannutama, who was bought by Bakit-Alsi, on the day of the Feast of Shebat, in the 9th year of Merodach-baladan, King of Babylon " ; " Binit-Nisukin, who was bought by Hakan in the month of Shebat in the 10th year of Merodach " ; " Halalat, who was acquired by Marmarih in the month of Shebat in the 11th year of Merodach-baladan, King of Babylon."

[69] Contract of the time of Nebuchadnezzar (Delaporte, p. 83).

[70] Contracts on olives now in the Louvre (Delaporte).

[71] Delaporte, p. 88.

[72] The girdle of string which the harlot wore round her body indicated that her modesty was but a slender tie, which might

easily be broken by a determined wooer (Dufour, *Histoire de la prostitution chez tous les peuples du monde*, chh. i–ii).

[73] Baruch, vi, 42–3.

[74] Book of rites in the Kuyunjik Collection (Thureau-Dangin, "Rituel et amulettes contre Labartu", in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, xviii).

[75] Epic of Gilgamesh, in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 201.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 199.

[77] Herodotos saw these scenes about 440 B.C. and Strabo four hundred years later. Alexander the Great was shocked by the immorality of the Babylonians.

[78] Baruch, v.

[79] Pallis, pp. 172–3.

[80] For this quarter of Babylon, see Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 239 ff., and King, *History of Babylon*, pp. 82, 86.

[81] A large number of the tablets found in Babylon were in this quarter, in jars. Here the contemporaries of Hammurabi concealed duplicates of all their contracts. Many letters are in what seem to have been envelopes, and it is surprising how many were unopened (Koldewey, p. 244).

[82] Koldewey, p. 243.

[83] Koldewey, pp. 286 ff. This was the largest house in Babylon which had been excavated up to that time.

[84] See detailed plan in Koldewey, p. 288.

[85] This is based on a letter of the Agade period, from Ishkun-Dagan to Puzur-Ishtar, in the Louvre, published by Thureau-Dangin in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, 1926. My attribution of it to Neriglissar is fictitious.

[86] Koldewey, p. 288, plan.

[87] *Ibid.*

[88] Isaiah, xlvii, 1, 8.

[89] Heeren, *Le Commerce dans l'antiquité*, vol. i, p. 228.

[90] Babylonian proverbs in Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 398.

[91] *Ibid.*

[92] Quintus Curtius, v, 1. "There is nothing more extraordinary than the manners of this city, and nowhere are things better arranged with a view to voluptuous pleasures."

[93] Father Scheil, in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, xii (1915), No. 1.

[94] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. ii, p. 740. See also Delaporte on adoption in Babylonia, pp. 79–80.

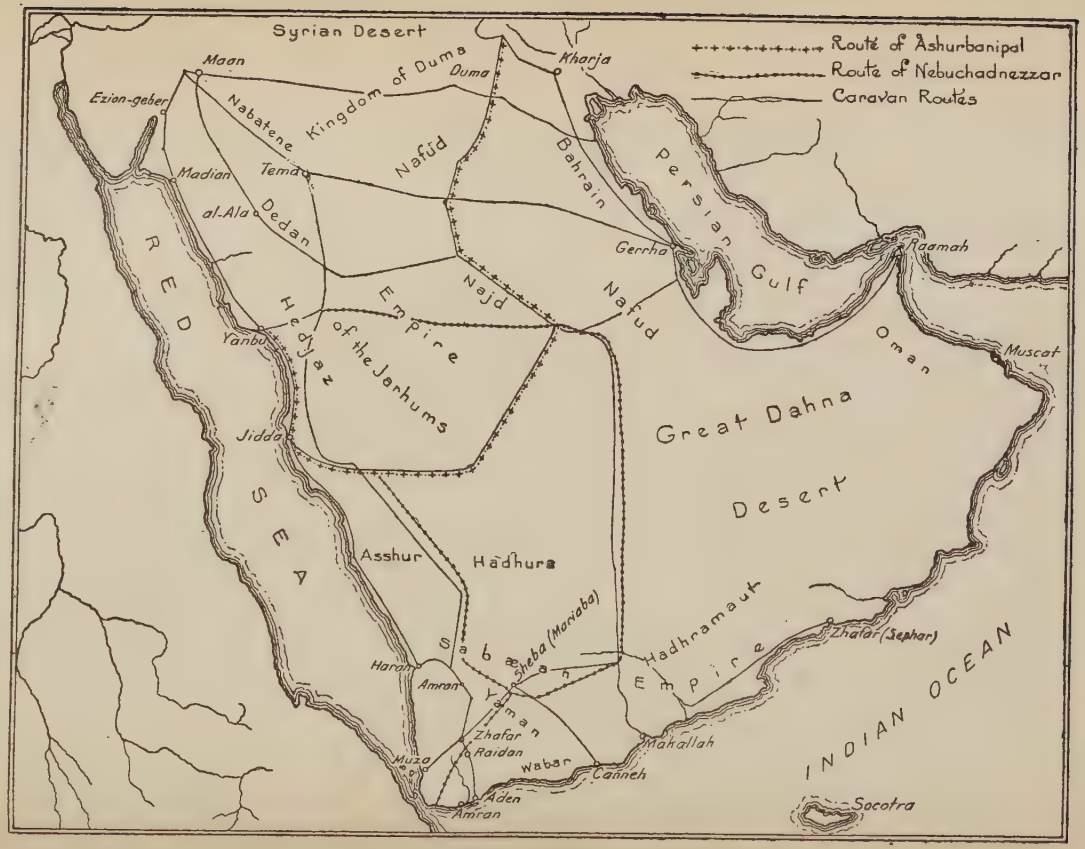
[95] Susanna, *passim*.

[96] Paul Toscane, in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, vii (1909–10), p. 66.

[97] On a pre-Sargonic cylinder of Gudea, in the article quoted in n. 96.

[98] Psalm cxxxvii.

[99] Pallis, pp. 172, 174.



Map of Arabia.
Based on that of Lenormant

CHAPTER EIGHT

LORD OF THE WORLD

One morning of the year 585, the people of Babylon made as one man for the King's Palace. Under the high walls, they were like a frozen tide of men, waiting motionless but anxious. Nabonidus, the King's son-in-law, had returned to the capital yesterday. To-day he was to be received by the King, that he might report on the mission of conciliation on which he had been sent to Alyattes, King of Lydia, and Cyaxares, King of the Medes.[1] Did he bring war? Or peace? War with either Media or Lydia would be a hazardous thing, of which Judah, Tyre, and Egypt might take advantage to lift up their heads.

Even before the time appointed for the audience had come, Nebuchadnezzar was in the throne-room. He felt that he was at a turning-point of his destiny. On the fall of Nineveh, Nabopolassar had kept Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Syria for himself, and had given Assyria to his ally, Cyaxares, the King of the Medes. In doing so, he had not dreamed that Cyaxares, encouraged by his easy success, would take advantage of that key-position on the upper Tigris to establish himself in the valley of the Araxes, and, after occupying the great quadrilateral of mountains bounded on the south by the desert, on the east by the Caspian, on the north by the Caucasus, and on the west by Antitaurus, would lead his victorious armies almost into Cappadocia and to the very frontiers of the Pterian Confederation.

Nebuchadnezzar was disturbed by this new empire

of his ally, the frontiers and influence of which extended further every day.[2] He had decided that his Asiatic policy must take this new situation into account. There could be no question of a frontal attack on the Medes, who had given striking proof of their military excellence before Nineveh. He had thought that diplomacy would make it possible to find a counterpoise to the growing influence of Media, which was building up, on the very borders of his own kingdom, a strong, united empire, in the place of the jumble of peoples and cities, divided among themselves, whose very wars justified profitable and not very risky intervention.

The influence of Media was making itself felt across the Tigris, pushing out at places towards the Euphrates. At Harran the Temple of Sin, venerated by all Semites, had been sacked and the Scythians were in possession. They threatened the Babylonian authority on the borders of Mesopotamia itself, and especially the communications of Babylon with her western provinces, which ensured access to the Mediterranean.[3] Nebuchadnezzar felt fairly confident that his faithful ally Cyaxares had secretly negotiated with the Scythians and had promised them his protection. They were always ready for adventures, and would be useful instruments of his schemes.

Nabopolassar had not foreseen that in less than a quarter of a century his ally would build up the Median Empire from its ruins, when he had diverted the ambitions of Lydia to the Hellespont. When Nebuchadnezzar came to the throne, he had at once seen the change of policy that was needed. Alyattes, the King of Lydia, had skilfully consolidated his power from Æolis to the Troad and Bithynia. By an agreement with Miletos, the destruction of Smyrna, and an alliance with Ephesos, he had secured the most important outlets on the Mediterranean. Nebuchadnezzar, by his secret emissaries, had drawn the atten-

tion of Alyattes back to the eastern frontiers of his kingdom, where the ambitions of Media were reviving with the victories of Cyaxares. Lydia and Media would counterbalance each other, and on their rivalry the fortune of Babylon would be made.[4]

Alyattes, indeed, had recently grown uneasy. The troops of Cyaxares had descended victoriously into the valley of the Halys, and arrived in front of Pteria. In the hands of the Lydians, that fortress, almost impregnable on its rock, would protect their conquests; if it fell to the Medes, the gates of Asia Minor were open to them. Then one evening, when Alyattes returned to Sardis, his capital, a horde of Scythians had appeared and begged for his protection against Cyaxares. They had been engaged by the King of the Medes to teach the young nobles of his retinue the use of the bow and arrows, and, in revenge for an unjust punishment, they had made him eat one of their pupils, disguised in a dish, and had fled.[5] Here the agents of Nebuchadnezzar had seen the pretext which they wanted. When the envoys of Cyaxares came to demand the surrender of the fugitives, they had persuaded Alyattes to act in a manner gratifying to his own pride and useful to Babylonian interests, and Alyattes had refused to give up the men who had trusted him.

For six years after that, war had gone on between the two kings with equal success. Nebuchadnezzar had followed with interest the ups and downs of the fighting which weakened his two most dangerous rivals and left him free to consolidate the hegemony of Babylon over Palestine, the kingdom of Judah, and Syria. But he was too wary a politician to allow a decisive action on the part of either belligerent to leave him faced with an elated victor.[6]

Moreover, the continuance of hostilities was a threat to the economic activity of Babylon, for it made its outlets on the Mediterranean very precarious. Media-

tion, coming at the right moment, would ensure him certain economic advantages from both the adversaries, without great risk. Reasons of policy were reinforced by the dictates of sentiment: Queen Amytis reminded him of his duties as an ally to her father, the King of Media, who had given her to him as a pledge of friendship.

For many reasons, therefore, Nebuchadnezzar had determined to arrange with Syennesis, King of Cilicia, to offer their joint mediation to the belligerents when they were on the point of engaging in what would probably be a decisive conflict. The mission, which was entrusted to Nabonidus, was made the easier by a total eclipse of the sun, which, on the 28th May, 585, plunged the two armies in darkness and alarm.[7] Alyattes and Cyaxares, greatly impressed, welcomed the proposals of Nabonidus with an enthusiasm which was only equalled by their common terror.

Nebuchadnezzar was eager to hear the details of this successful negotiation from his son-in-law's own lips. Apart from those terms of the treaty which affected Babylon directly, he wanted to have information about the Lydian Empire, which owed so much to the civilization and science of Chaldæa, but had adapted it and blended it with the civilizations of Greece and Phœnicia for its own glory.

Sardis, the capital of Lydia, standing on the road from the Persian Gulf on the Sea of the Rising Sun to the Ægean, was the outpost of Oriental civilization, facing a new continent, which was unknown to Nebuchadnezzar save for something that he knew of its resources. It was steeped in Babylonian culture, somewhat lightened by contact with the eclectic art of the Phœnicians; and across the sea the Greeks, a crafty race, were already taking the most typical manifestations of that culture and recreating them with a genius all their own.

Even before the news of the armistice between

Alyattes and Cyaxares reached Sardis, the city was talking about the wonderful Thales of Miletos, who, by a clever stroke of opportunism and self-advertisement, had predicted the great eclipse which had precipitated the happy ending to the conflict. No one dreamed that Thales had merely made use of the forecasts scientifically drawn by Nebuchadnezzar's magicians from the tablets in the temples of Chaldæa. Nebuchadnezzar was as much astonished by this as by the to-do which Sardis made over Anaximander of Miletos, because he had drawn a picture of the world on a sheet of copper; such maps were common in Babylonia, showing the peoples and kingdoms all along the Royal Road of the Empire.[8] He had also heard that two young Greeks established in Samos, Rhœcos and Theodoros,[9] had had the effrontery to claim that they had invented the art of casting metals, which had been practised in Assyria and Babylonia for many years.[10]

There were disturbing signs in all this. Some day soon, the economic and political expansion of Babylon to the west might be checked, and every outlet to the Mediterranean closed. Access to the Indian Ocean was already very precarious. Nabonidus must tell him exactly to what extent this Western influence could be felt. It boded no good for Babylon. He knew how dangerous were the manners and ideas of the West, which Sardis was already adopting. Absolute monarchy was still maintained in Lydia, as it had been ever since the reign of Gyges, who had submitted to the Assyrians, but it was based only on the force of arms. The divine descent of the King and the divine unction counted for nothing, and in the districts all round Lydia, where the traditions of authority were weaker, princes and oligarchies were tumbling down one after the other, overthrown by ambition, eloquence, violence, and fraud. Nebuchadnezzar had heard shocking stories of the happenings in those

barbarous regions. In those parts, if you wished to rule, you had to have the support of all classes of society without distinction, even those which, in Babylon, had no reason for existing except that they might work. Even in Sardis, under the Kingship of Alyattes, it seemed that birth was no longer considered as a qualification for conducting affairs of state; only wealth counted.

Nebuchadnezzar tossed his head. What madness—when the general interests of the city or the kingdom were at stake, to listen to the counsel of all alike, rich and poor, noble and common! The will of one man was sufficient, when it was inspired by the sovereign god, the lord of heaven and earth. How could just maxims on the law and strong notions of duty to one's country be based on the equality and liberty of men who had not received the light of the divine secrets, who had no critical sense, who were not driven on by ambition or pride? Nabonidus must tell him all about these vexatious innovations which the Lydian Empire had introduced into the sound traditions which it had taken from Babylon; they were bound to bring disaster.

The voice of Nabonidus sounded unusually loud in the dim light which reigned in the throne-room, as he related the incidents of his mission and pictured, in that gloomy place, the gentle charm of the culture which had conquered his crude Babylonian soul. He hurriedly gave a dry, accurate account of the armistice which he had persuaded the two stubborn adversaries to make, by which neither would be left dangerously powerful. He dwelt with satisfaction on the advantages which he had obtained for Babylonian trade: it would have free access to the Mediterranean, and some of the caravans from India and Arabia which used to go to the coasts of Asia Minor by way of Egypt or Syria would now go through Babylon. He described how, in accordance with ancient tradition, each of the two

kings had pierced the right arm of the other, sucked the blood, and so sealed the pact of eternal friendship with an inviolable engagement.[11] As the pledge of that alliance, Alyattes was to give his daughter Aryenis in marriage to Astyages, the son of Cyaxares.

His voice became softer as he spoke, with affectionate regret, of Sardis, whither Alyattes had conducted him after the conclusion of the armistice. One evening, at sunset, he had come down from the gorges of the *Katakekaumene*, the Burnt Land, into a vast amphitheatre, and saw Sardis rising behind its battlemented walls like the city of a dream, a flower of white stone among verdure and water. The acropolis, the temples, and the royal treasury rose above the glowing landscape, with the dark, wild range of Tmolos for a background.

He had entered the city by a poor quarter, and then, by semi-circular terraces, he had mounted to the trading city at the foot of the acropolis. There, in a maze of lanes between white houses, East and West swarmed, mingling the traces of a rude past and its old trades with a youthful, smiling luxury, which first startled and then fascinated. Nabonidus waxed enthusiastic as he described the warehouses, the caravanserais, the leather-market, the weavers' quarter, gay with crimson stuffs, and above all the perfumers' quarter, where the famous *baccaris* was sold. There the atmosphere was heavy with perfumes based on saffron, which brought forgetfulness of everything that had any other object than to charm, and the practical Chaldæans had settled there, to sell the amulets which opened the doors to the dreams evoked by those perfumes.

Nabonidus had been especially struck by the way in which, while Babylonian culture was still alive in Sardis, its heaviness and flamboyance—without which an Oriental could not conceive of strength—was adorned with a smiling grace which softened it. At

that meeting-point, the two civilizations were harmoniously combined so as to awake thoughts and needs which neither could understand by itself. The whole city, the poor quarters no less than the district of palaces, was full of a wonderfully alive throng. Men looked at him with intelligent, amused eyes, full of pleasant familiarity, marvelling at the heavy, ornate dress in which he was wrapped, in contrast to the loose woollen garments in which they moved so easily.

Alyattes had received him in the Palace, where many banquets had been given in his honour.[12] He had eaten *karyke* and *kandaulos*, strange stews seasoned with aphrodisiacs. When night came, they had taken him into a dark, mysterious park, where a whole town lay hid among the trees, reeking of roses and cosmetics. This was the unobtrusive quarter of feasting and debauchery, the "good corner" or "arena of women", where the brothels were, surrounded by the beauties of nature and the sanctity of temples, that of Cybele being the largest. The courtesans of Sardis, clad in diaphanous blue *sandyces* which hung to their bare feet, were far more enchanting than the Babylonian women, rolled up in their heavy dresses. Nabonidus blushed. He heard in his mind the plaintive old Asiatic airs which these women had sung, to the accompaniment of the flute or lyre, while others swayed in a monotonous, voluptuous dance. Like the women in the temple of Mylitta in Babylon, the women of the "good corner" rose at the bidding of a stranger. Nabonidus was lost in his dream of delight. He heard the orgies of Atys,[13] he saw the rapt face of the priestess who, in the warm, scented shadows, had given him the kiss of the goddess.

But Nebuchadnezzar had not been listening to him for some time. He knew enough now to have no further fear on the score of the disputes of Media and Lydia, which, if they had continued, might have drawn him into an intervention from which he could have

hoped for no real profit.[14] By inserting a clause in the peace-treaty, which reserved for Babylon free access to the Mediterranean through Asia Minor, Nabonidus had weakened the hold of the Phœnician cities. They would no longer be able to abuse the monopoly of all western trade which they owed to their geographical position. Babylonian trade would go rather to the cities of Asia Minor, the Troad, and all Asiatic Greece, and the competition thus set up would benefit Babylon both in the disposal of her products and in the obtaining of her requirements.[15] Nebuchadnezzar's mind, freed from the cares of yesterday, had flown to the ambitions of to-morrow.

While Nabonidus stood there silent, Nebuchadnezzar saw his dream of glory in a new light, which was thrown on it by the just, quiet, good man whom he already loved as a son. It was not enough to accumulate conquests and collect countries, as the Assyrians had done. A day would inevitably come when the conqueror would perish of his conquests if they were not justified by economic objects, if they did not bring into the conquered countries, in the train of the armies, a regular flow of life and wealth.

Now, away in the very south of Arabia,[16] the ports of Canneh and Aden were heaped with goods from India, the mysterious country from which came all the riches which were prized by the world—gold, precious stones, tin, sandal-wood, spices. All that priceless trade was carried by caravans over Arabia to the ports and markets of Phœnicia, by routes which were not under Babylonian control. To those same ports and markets, in exchange for spices, precious stones, and gold, Syria sent its wheat, oil, and wine, Phœnicia its pottery, Cilicia its saffron, and the valley of the Jordan its iron and bronze and purple cloths.

These exchanges gave rise to much profitable business, and Babylon ought to have it. Egypt, in the days of its greatness, had already striven to divert that

flow of wealth to the Red Sea, offering the canal which Seti I had dug between that sea and the Nile instead of the dangerous, brigand-infested caravan-routes across Arabia; but the canal had filled up with sand, and the Phœnician trading-stations on the Persian Gulf had attracted all the Indian goods to themselves, selling them to Babylon at an enormous profit.

India! Nebuchadnezzar described its marvellous opulence to Nabonidus, dwelling on each detail with a mixture of cupidity and ambition.[17] In the north, in the countries to the east of Bactriana, among the mountains of Mustagh and Imaus, the land of gold, lapis-lazuli, onyx, and sardonyx,[18] precious and semi-precious stones were harvested like barley on the banks of the Euphrates. "Emeralds and jaspers come from the great Desert of Gobi. They are collected there by horsemen, who go there at the season of the north winds, when those winds lift the sand and carry it away."[19] Over there, too, all the mountains contained gold, and it was to be found in every torrent. In the waters which washed the island of Ceylon, pearls were fished, which the Babylonians preferred for their adornment to those of the Persian Gulf.[20] From those happy regions, too, came the dogs which, for their courage in attacking wild beasts, the Babylonian aristocracy always took with them to the hunt, and even on their travels and to war.[21] The cochineal, an insect which lived "in the lands near the sources of the River Indus", supplied the incomparable dyes which the ladies of Babylon loved. From India came the spices which gave a zest to food as luxury did to life, especially cinnamon, the mysterious bark which was taken by birds to their nests and obtained by guile.[22]

All these goods ought to flow into Babylon, without the Phœnicians, Arabs, or Egyptians levying a toll which increased their price. Babylon, the "city of merchants", as Ezekiel called it,[23] must be the sole

entrepôt of all these goods, the centre where they were exchanged. So Nebuchadnezzar had resolved in his inviolate glory. His troops would protect the caravans on the routes from Arabia to Asia Minor, and he would improve roads and waterways so as to make Babylon a chief centre of communications. Her supremacy would be gloriously asserted, once she had secured the control of the trade of the world by the normal working of economic forces.

But alas, before Babylon could sit on the only road to India, there were many obstacles to be overcome, which Nebuchadnezzar described to Nabonidus.[24] First, the pride of the Phœnicians, who robbed the riches of Babylon, must be broken by the destruction of Tyre, their chief fortress on the Mediterranean and the point for which all the caravans made. He must also destroy the ports in Southern Arabia, or Arabia Felix, which drew the vessels bound from India away from the Persian Gulf[25]—Canneh and Aden in the Yaman, Sephar in the land of Sheba, and Muscat on the coast of Oman.[26] Then he must obtain control of the trade-route through the Yaman, and disorganize the regular passage of caravans across the peninsula; so the ships returning from the land of riches would be compelled to go to the Persian Gulf and the mouth of the Euphrates for the only safe and quick route, which would lead, by Babylon, to the markets of Asia and the West. For the last two years, he had been building a magnificent port at Teredon in Kar-Duniash, at the head of the Persian Gulf, at the end of the Nahr-Malka and Aracan, the two great canals which he had just completed, in order that ships of the heaviest burden might enter the country. At the same time, he had taken pains to make the Euphrates navigable up to Babylon, and even above it as far as Thapsacus, whence there was a comparatively short caravan-route to the Mediterranean. As a seaport on the Persian Gulf, " his sea ", Babylon would be a great

market, at which all the wealth of the world would be exchanged and all the consumers and producers of the world would meet.[27]

Nabonidus listened to his King. Carried away by the splendid projects of Nebuchadnezzar, he was already thinking that the Empire was growing too large and that, to make that great work complete, it would be necessary to build another capital [28] in the heart of Arabia, to assert the authority of Babylon at the centre of the caravan-lines re-established by Babylon for her own sole advantage.[29]

Tents on a waste of sand,[30] with a higher, gaudier tent in front. Only Nebuchadnezzar and the sentries were awake. Before him, Arabia, a formidable chaos of granite, lay asleep. The thin crescent of the moon hung in the eastern sky, and there was complete silence. Men and things were at peace, wearied by the glare of the sun and the mirages. Above the tents, the tops of palm-trees swayed like a light curtain, dark violet in colour.

The King looked beyond the oasis where his army slept across the rolling stretch of sand, still flushed under the moon, with deep troughs full of shadow. His mind reached out over the boundless, empty spaces to the dark line which barred the horizon behind him—the last ridges of the Syrian Desert, through the other end of which he had driven, alone and anxious, to his throne thirty-five years before. He tried, but vainly, to see, beyond those gentle undulations, the swamps in which "his rivers", the Tigris and Euphrates, lost themselves before falling into "his sea", the Persian Gulf.[31] Turning to the west, he thought that he saw, against the starry blue sky, a slow, silent procession of caravans. By the kingdom of Duma, the famous caravan-route [32] ran from the port of Muscat in Oman, following the coast of his Persian Gulf, and too often taking the goods of India through

Arabia, from Gerrha to Midian and thence to Phœnicia, Lydia, and Cappadocia, without going near Babylon.

On the road which Sennacherib and Ashurbanipal had taken before him, he saw the successive stages of his dream, now a tangible reality, marked by the ruins which still showed where the great Assyrian conquerors had passed. They, too, had felt that their empire was not safe until they had reduced Arabia and Egypt, the two dangerous reservoirs of men and, still more, of the riches which were even in those days the sinews of war.[33] With the reflection that to-morrow there would be other bones and ruins to frighten away from these routes the caravans which did not yet know the power of Babylon, Nebuchadnezzar fell asleep, amid a silence which was too intense for his excited condition.

At dawn, without once looking back, he plunged with his army into the unknown land which attracted him and which seemed to breed desolation and death under the oppressive sun. On his left, all that remained of the magnificent kingdom of Duma was a few wretched communities, huddling fearfully round ruins invaded by the sand, and the memory of the woman Yatrib, whom Sennacherib had taken from his harem and set on the throne of the kingdom, from which men were excluded by old tradition.[34] Turning from these regions where the Assyrian devastation had already done his work, Nebuchadnezzar was attracted by Tema, the meeting-point of the caravans for Gerrha, Petra, Sheba, and Babylon. Did he foresee that Nabonidus would make it the capital of the Empire?[35] He turned aside, and his cold will, stronger than his desires, drove his army southwards. It was down there, at their starting-point on the coast of Arabia Felix, that the stream of the great caravans must be diverted. He went on, in the direction which Ashurbanipal had taken in his great campaign of conquest. Crossing the Nafud, he entered the Najd.[36]

Distant mountains stood black above the gold of the sand, and new spaces were revealed. The great desert of the Dahna gave a painful impression of size, stretching away in sand and stone towards a sea, the presence of which could already be divined. It was crossed only by the faint tracks made by the caravans. These spread out from the direction of the Persian Gulf, one going westwards to the holy Caaba by the

Arabs of the Seventh Century b.c.

Sculpture of the time of Ashurbanipal, from King.

Red Sea and the other southwards to the marvellous kingdom of Sheba.[37] That crossways of the desert seemed infinitely empty.

In a dip in the ground there was an oasis, with palms and running water, in which were rude tents, and a swarm of inquisitive, frightened people. They had come upon a nomadic tribe of Jarhums, who did not think of offering any resistance to the Babylonian army.[38] Most of the men were ragged and dull-eyed.

Some reeled about, drunk, and others were yelling round the cut-up body of a camel, some of them drawing pieces of it by lot and the others betting on them frantically. Nebuchadnezzar had nothing to expect or fear from these nomadic gamblers and drunkards, and he ordered his men to drive them away with whips and to set up his tents where theirs had been. Through these roving tribes, with their little kings, their merchants, and their slaves, it was at the prosperity of Tyre that he must strike, for Tyre had managed to make use of their ignorant credulity to satisfy its insatiable greed for gain.

As the sky was reddening, a mass of black shadows appeared on the horizon, and the soft tread of men and beasts on the sand could be heard. It was a big caravan, coming from the kingdom of Sheba, probably from Mariaba, the capital. Nebuchadnezzar saw one group after another appear, an endless procession of men, armed with spears and javelins, striding lightly by the side of camels which sloped along under bales of Indian goods which had been unshipped at Canneh in the previous season. He remembered the words in which Ezekiel had addressed Tyre: "Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they were the merchants of thy hand; in lambs, and rams, and goats, in these were they thy merchants. The traffickers of Sheba and Raamah . . . they traded for thy wares with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. Haran and Canneh and Eden . . . were thy merchants." "Edom was thy merchant . . . they traded for thy wares with emeralds, purple and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and rubies." [39] "Dedan was thy trafficker in precious cloths for riding." [40]

Brief orders were given, the chariots extended, and when the sun set all that was left on the yellow sand was bodies of men horribly mutilated or contorted in a last struggle and camels lying with their four legs

spread up towards the pink sky. In the Babylonian tents, they were counting the plunder. Next day, the return caravan had no sooner shown its black figures on the opposite horizon than those figures too were corpses.

Arriving on the border of the Najd,[41] Nebuchadnezzar deliberately set out on the track of Ashurbanipal and made for the Yaman road, that other caravan-route which ran direct from the Kingdom of Sheba the length of the Red Sea, crossing the Hijaz to the Phœnician trading-station at Tema and the grim mountains of Edom. He entered the Hijaz.[42] In the clear distance, ridges of granite rose in fantastic shapes, blue and pink, against the sky. The country began to be less desolate; scrubby little plants appeared in the sand, shedding strong, unfamiliar scents, and from the great dunes, rising by imperceptible degrees towards the horizon, music went up like a soft, mysterious call, the song of the light on the sand and running water.[43]

In front of Mecca, Adnan, a descendant of Ishmael, united the tribes of Nebaioth and the Joktanite Jarhums, who dwelt in the country, under his leadership, and led them in an attempt to stop the Chaldæans and to protect the holy Caaba, their national shrine. One morning, there was a furious encounter at Dhat-irk —a wild rush of horsemen swirling round the heavy Babylonian formations and then a sudden flight as the Arabs scattered in panic in every direction.

At this point Ashurbanipal had turned north, but Nebuchadnezzar went due south, along the Red Sea, by the caravan-route to Sheba.[44] Every day, caravans coming along the coast-road were slaughtered and pillaged. As the Chaldæans moved southwards, the country gradually became pleasanter, and then one evening, in the last golden rays of the setting sun, all the wealth of Sheba lay before them. Here and there, dominating the wide plains of green barley from the top of inaccessible rocks, frowning walls rose on the

path. These were the strongholds of the great vassals and barons of the Yaman,[45] round which communities of peasants and craftsmen gathered for protection. The army passed through the luxuriant countryside and the wealthy cities, all so full of life, leaving ruins and dead bodies behind it, as it had done along the desert tracks.

But there were greater prospects of loot in this country, the ports of which, Makallah, Canneh, Aden,

Arabs of the Time of Ashurbanipal.

and Muza, received the goods coming from India. "In that country," Agatharchides says, "the people have in their houses an incredible abundance of vases and utensils of all kinds, made of gold and silver, and couches and tripods of silver. The porches of the houses have columns plated with gold and surmounted by silver capitals, and the friezes, the lintels, and the door-frames are adorned with gold pateræ set with precious stones." At Mariaba, which admitted him unopposed and undertook to pay tribute, Nebuchadnezzar could not help admiring a civilization even more

brilliant than that of Babylon—the irrigation-channels, the reservoirs, the embankments, the walls, and the palace dominating a city which gleamed with white stone and gold. Above the palace was a tower of seven diminishing stories, paved with marble, and at the corners there were huge lions, which roared when the wind blew into their mouths.[46]

But the report of the conqueror's exploits, carried abroad by the nomads of the desert, went before him and created a void in his path. All fled at his approach and presently privation, the fatigue of forced marches under a leaden sun, and doubts as to the route, compelled Nebuchadnezzar to halt before the unexplored solitudes of the Dahna. In his pride, he would have conquered nature herself, and he attempted the impossible, urging on his army with the mirages with which his imagination still encouraged his own unsatisfied ambition; but the murmurs of his troops, who were gradually melting away in the heat, checked him, as Napoleon was checked in the Russian snows.

He made up his mind to retreat. The sight of whole tribes, those of Wabar and Hadhura, following him, laden with chains and baggage, would teach the peoples whom they passed all that they needed to know about Babylon. Slowly, as if regretfully, Nebuchadnezzar retreated northwards, meeting no further opposition, and leaving behind him among the remotest tribes such a name that he was regarded as an emissary of heaven, and for centuries the most fantastic legends, such as only an Oriental can imagine, would tell of his glory.

Again Arabia was flooded with the light of the sun, now behind his back, and sand and granite flamed as for an apotheosis. The jackals had made clean work of the bodies of men, camels, and horses, and the sand was gradually covering their skeletons. The great caravan-tracks [47] were deserted and silent, save for the croaking of carrion birds and the howling of jackals

and hyenas. The chiefs of the desert tribes, who did not quite know what had happened, went about telling each other their own experiences, with distortions and improvements. "Bukht-Nassar has passed by," they said.[48] "He is the general of Sennacherib, and he has a great army, of 50,000 men, 300 generals, and three wise men. He took Jerusalem, and he ordered his army to come into the desert, each man carrying a great sack, and to fill those sacks with earth, and to cast them on to the city of Jerusalem and cover it up." On the way north, Nebuchadnezzar reflected that this raid, though it could never be repeated, had, at least for a time, diverted part of the Indian trade away from the Kingdom of Sheba to Babylon and had destroyed Phœnician influence in Arabia.

But if he was to make this success completely profitable and permanent, he must make himself master of Egypt, and not only of the Egyptian ports on the Red Sea but of those of the Delta, and he must destroy Tyre for ever. As he travelled, dreaming, with the tribes and the princes of the Hijaz in his train, he was met by a courier from Babylon, who reported the latest prophecy of Ezekiel: "I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, King of Kings, from the north, with horses, and with chariots, and with horsemen, and companies, and much people. He shall make a fort against thee, and cast a mount against thee; and he shall set engines of war against thy walls, and with his axes he shall break down thy towers.[49] And I will make her like the top of a rock; it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea."

From between the huge trunks of the cedars of Lebanon, Nebuchadnezzar gazed at the Sea of the Setting Sun, marvellous in light and colour. From within its triple circuit, Tyre cast on those still waters a reflection of nothing but ruins, death, and desolation.

The last defenders of the proud city held only the citadel on the island, in which they had with indomitable energy defied the army of Nebuchadnezzar camped beneath the walls for thirteen years.[50] The citadel lay on the sea like a monstrous starfish, linked to the shore by one arm only. Day and night, it wore a crown of flame—the fire of the Temple of Moloch, where infants were sacrificed to the god, and the fire of the burning palace of King Ethbaal. A fleet cruised in the offing, waiting for the darkness in order to revictual the besieged, and Nebuchadnezzar recognized the ruddy sails of the Phœnicians and the white ones of the Egyptians, the faithful allies of the Queen of the Sea.

The King of Babylon had found an enemy worthy of his mettle in proud, recalcitrant Tyre. It had already resisted Shalmaneser and triumphed over Nineveh. It had been subdued by Sargon, Sennacherib, and Ashurbanipal, but had always recovered its independence and restored its prosperity.[51]

The Tyrians were wild adventurers. On unknown shores far west of Egypt, they had founded a second Tyre, named Carthage. Crossing the sea from there, they had colonized a new country, Spain,[52] from which they brought tin. They had braved an unknown ocean and sailed north till they came to a land full of fog, which is now England. Then they had crossed a strait to another country, where there was a river up which they travelled to a town called Alesia; and by another river, the Rhone, they had returned to the Sea of the Setting Sun, and had founded a port at the mouth of the river—Marseilles.[53] They had left their mark, in the shape of trading-stations, everywhere. Tyre had become the richest and busiest city in the world; her ships sailed every sea; and all the peoples of the world came to trade with her. The Tyrians had only recently given new proof of their courage and initiative, when they had set forth on the ocean to

conquer the continents of the far south of the world, without going through the Sea of the Rising Sun.[54] Their voyage had lasted three years, for they put in for the winter at the end of each fine season and sowed corn, and waited for it to ripen in order to provision their ships before setting sail again.[55]

But their courage would not help them. The word of Jehovah, as spoken by Ezekiel, would be fulfilled: "I will bring upon Tyrus Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, King of Kings. Then all the princes of the sea shall come down from their thrones; they shall sit upon the ground, and they shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, 'How art thou destroyed, that wast inhabited of seafaring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea!'"[56] Nebuchadnezzar gave the order for a supreme attempt on the citadel. Desperate fighting went on for several days. The sea was a mass of wreckage and dead bodies, and the citadel, assailed by the Babylonians without ceasing, was like a great amphitheatre collapsing amid smoke and sparks. One evening, over the sea which was stained with blood, a tremendous shout went up, drowning the groans of the wounded and dying; the attackers had broken in, and Tyre was conquered.

Some days later, Nebuchadnezzar, on the shore among the ruins of Old Tyre, inspected the long line of prisoners who had not been massacred as it filed past. "Every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold. The workmanship of thy tabrets and thy pipes was prepared in the day that thou wast created."[57] Now the people to whom these words were addressed were a famishing crew clad in rags. At their head tottered a figure streaming with blood and laden with chains, whose face was no longer human—Ethbaal, the King, who had sustained the siege for thirteen years. He was followed by a few

servants of his household and warriors, who had the frightened air of trapped beasts. Ethbaal, his warriors, and his nobles would go into Nebuchadnezzar's dungeons. Tyre would be razed to its rock, and at last the sea would belong to Babylon.

With Tyre fallen, what did Nebuchadnezzar need further? Had he not firmly established the Babylonian Empire, from the Sea of the Rising Sun to the Sea of the Setting Sun? Not yet. There was still one continent lacking, which the Assyrians had conquered in their time. That continent attracted him more than all his other conquests. Before it, he had had to halt in his twenties, when the death of his father had called him to the throne. It was Africa, with the Egyptians whom he had always found at the back of the machinations of his enemies.

Was the enterprise too daring? The King knew that he was old; this was the thirty-seventh year of his reign, and the sixty-first of his life. But his heart was young, and his pride strengthened him. One lovely morning in the year 568, his victorious armies set off for the south, to join the force which had for two years already been fighting in Egypt and had ravaged the country as far as the fortress of Syene and even to the frontiers of Ethiopia.[58]

Before following the army himself, Nebuchadnezzar went up to the Temple of Marduk, to consult the god, his master, about the timeliness of the campaign and its prospects of success. He had grown cautious with years, and he liked to have the support of the expression of the divine will. A slaughtered sheep already lay on the gold table before the great gold statue. The soothsayer brought a brazier, and set on a small table four pots of sesame, three dozen loaves, a mixture of butter and honey, and salt. He threw cinnabar (dragon's-blood) on the brazier.

"Cinnabar is cast on the flame," said the book of

ritual. "If it burns, the omen is good; if not, it is bad."

"Prophesying all that can be named, thou dost establish destiny,"[59] the soothsayer murmured to the flame, as it rose bright and high, declaring the favourable intentions of Marduk.

He then summoned Nebuchadnezzar, and led him to the body of the sheep. "May this sacrifice at the morning hour be pleasing to the august god by the virtue of this sheep, which is made of flesh and of perfect forms,"[60] he said. He plunged his hand into the carcase, and drew out the liver, which he examined carefully, while Nebuchadnezzar anxiously waited for the omen, not even feeling the warm blood which flowed about his feet.

"The oracle is doubtful. The god seems favourable, but he does not promise complete victory."

Nebuchadnezzar, in a hoarse voice, irritable with anxiety, chid the soothsayer, who took some of the sesame-oil and let it fall, drop by drop, into a basin of water. The oil formed on the surface in a regular, unbroken circle.[61]

"Victory! Victory!" cried the priest, flinging himself on his face before Marduk, and he was not up before Nebuchadnezzar was away in his chariot, in pursuit of his army.

With voice and gesture the King hastened on the pace of his Syrian horses. Ashpenaz, by his side, added to his enthusiasm by relating a thousand other favourable signs. The night before, he had learned that, in a street near the Palace, a child had been born with white hair; that meant that the King would have a happy old age. In another street, near by, a child had been born with all its teeth fully formed; that meant, not only that the King would live to a very great age, but that his country would be powerful among all foreign lands. In Merkes, a child had been born with a beard, a sure sign of abundant rain;

moreover, it had a mouth like an old man's, a portent of great prosperity: "Sin will give Babylonia a magnificent harvest and there will be plenty in the land."[62] In the hovels which stood at the edge of the palm-groves near Hillah, Ashpenaz had been assured that a mare had produced a foal with a lion's head; about an omen like that there could be no mistake; the country would be increased.[63]

Nebuchadnezzar urged on his chariot, and they galloped wildly along the road to Jerusalem, and then over the desert dunes by the sea to Gaza. There could be no doubt of victory. Egypt was much weakened.[64] Pharaoh Apries had made a disastrous expedition into Cyrenaïca, though he called himself "the most fortunate of the Pharaohs who had reigned before him". A revolt of his troops had compelled him to resign the throne to Amasis. Frightful internal struggles had ensued, which had divided the forces of the country at the time when they should have been concentrated. The moment had really come to fall on that easy prey, to punish it for its past intrigues against Babylonian rule in Syria and Palestine, and to deprive it for a long time of all power or inclination to play a part in foreign politics. Amasis could not resist the Babylonian armies with his native troops, aided only by Greek mercenaries, who as often as not made common cause with the enemy. Besides, even if Pharaoh had secured the services of a large body of Greeks,[65] the nobles of Lesbos, led by Antimenidas, the brother of the poet Alcæos and the rival of Pittacos, had joined the army of Babylon.

Nebuchadnezzar came up with his troops before Pelusium,[66] which, with the forts of Migdol and Tahpanhes, defended Egypt on the Syrian side, on the bank of the sacred river. Everything seemed still and petrified in the crude light, and a fine dust filled the air, distorting distant objects. On the bare waste, the tents of the Babylonian army looked like thousands

of little pyramids. Beyond the swamps of the Wadi al-Arish, Pelusium was on the alert within its rampart of pinkish stone. Nebuchadnezzar heard the anxious note of the alarm-trumpets, and ordered his own trumpeters to sound the assault. The hunt was up.

Having captured Pelusium, Nebuchadnezzar, doubtful which road to take, decided to ask the god of the Jews, Jehovah, who had always guided him on his campaigns. He proceeded through the delightful country watered by the Pelusiac Arm of the Nile to Tahpanhes.[67] There Jeremiah had taken refuge after the assassination of Gedaliah, the governor of Jerusalem, with a whole colony of Jews who had been driven from their city by Nebuchadnezzar and were now waiting for him to take vengeance on them.[68] The old prophet, foaming with rage before the fine temples of Ashtaroth, Queen of Heaven, which lured away many of his disciples, had, like Ezekiel, triumphantly announced to Pharaoh the coming of Nebuchadnezzar, the Sword of the Lord. A man from Tahpanhes reported that Jeremiah had made a heap of great bricks on the terrace in front of Pharaoh's palace, and had declared that they would be made into a throne for the King of Babylon after he had chastised Egypt. "Behold, I will send and take Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, my servant. And such as are for death shall be given to death, and such as are for captivity to captivity, and such as are for the sword to the sword."[69] So Nebuchadnezzar made for Tahpanhes,[70] a large town, with the brick palace of Pharaoh standing in the middle of the encampment of his Ionian troops.[71]

Before the battle which was to decide the campaign, Nebuchadnezzar was seized with alarms. Might not Jehovah, whose temple he had destroyed, disavow his prophet, abandon Nebuchadnezzar, and avenge himself? Had he been drawn into a trap? He called

for his scribe, and dictated a supreme invocation to Gula:

"Goddess Gula, thou who dost cast down mine enemies,
Who dost gladden my heart at the cost of them with whom I fight,
Who dost grant booty to my hands and then givest rest,
Increase the renown of my kingship!
Above all kings, exalt his valour!
Look on his prince, and incline to his warriors!
Go to him who is his adversary, and stay him!
O Goddess Gula!" [72]

And once again victory crowned the Babylonian standards, and allowed Nebuchadnezzar to set up his tent on the brick threshold of the palace of Amasis, which was found and identified by Flinders Petrie in 1886.[73]

There was a swift, glorious raid through Egypt. The country was rent by terrible intestine convulsions, Amasis was dead, and Apries had recovered the throne. As a conclusion to the campaign, Nebuchadnezzar dictated this triumphal inscription:

"In his thirty-seventh year,[74] Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon,
Went to the land of Egypt to make war.
Amasis, King of Egypt, raised his troops,
Ku, of the city of Putu-javan. . . .
Lands remote from the centre of the sea,
Numerous in the heart of the land of Egypt,
Weapons, horses,
He raised, then, for his succour.
But Nebuchadnezzar did not wait before him
. . . he trusted himself to his gods and acted. . . .
. . . So he made
A crushing . . . of them,
A destruction . . . of them,
An annihilation . . .
A sweeping away . . ."

Nebuchadnezzar left behind him in Egypt a Babylon,[75] built by his soldiers in the Delta of the Nile. He had realized all the dreams of his youth. He had

given to his capital Arabia, Egypt, Judæa, Syria, and Phœnicia, seas, ports, and caravan-trade. Drunk with pride and joy, he returned to his empire, to enjoy his glory and to glut his people with riches.

As he had done when he was twenty, the old King turned off from the route of caravans and armies, and sped on his chariot to Babylon over the Syrian Desert. He considered that the time had come for him to be deified.[76] Tradition and law would long ago have allowed him to claim this honour, as all his ancestors had done. But he had wanted his work as a man to be completed. He wanted the lofty dream of all Babylonians to become, through him, a prodigious reality. His godhead would have all the more force and prestige with his people if they saw it as the just reward for their wealth and prosperity. The Babylonians were not like those demented Jews, who worshipped a god on the ruins of his temple. Nebuchadnezzar would be for his subjects the greatest of the gods,[77] and the most adored, now that he had made Babylon the mistress of the world. Indeed, just as in the time of the great Hammurabi, his people had already, without waiting for his divine statue to be set up, started calling their sons Nabu-kudurri-utsur-ilu (meaning " Nebuchadnezzar-is-God "), and Nabu-kudurri-utsur-Shamshi (" Nebuchadnezzar-is-my-Sun "), and Nabu-kudurri-utsur-bani (" Nebuchadnezzar-is-my-Creator ").[78]

It was certainly time that there was a statue of him for his subjects to worship. Tradition demanded it. Before the Babylonian dynasties arose, the glorious kings of Sumer had been deified. The diorite statue of Gudea, King of Lagash,[79] stood in Eninnu, the temple which he had loved, and for two thousand years one month in the twelve had been devoted to burning incense and offering sacrifices to him and singing hymns in his praise. A successor of Sargon, Naram-

Sin, had been " the god of Agade " and " the god of his country ", and was shown on his stele of victory wearing the horned tiara which the Kassite king, Agum-kakrime, had called " the diadem of dominion, the mark of godhead ".[80] When the great Hammurabi had made the laws of Babylon, he had codified this ancient tradition, and had himself assumed the title " God of Kings ", *ilu-sharri*.[81] Lastly, the Assyrian oppressors, and Ashurbanipal in particular, had maintained the custom and had caused colossal gold statues of themselves to be made.[82]

But Nebuchadnezzar's statue was to be the biggest ever seen.[83] It was to be sixty cubits high and six across, and to contain at least 138 tons of gold. Nebuchadnezzar remembered the complaint which a courier had brought to him in the previous year, when he had been in Galilee. Two of his officials in that country had been accused of embezzling the gold intended for his statue. " To the King, my Lord," he had read, " thy servant Arad-Nabu. Peace to the King, my Lord ! May Shamash, Bel, Zarpanit, Nabu, Tashmetu, and Ishtar, the mighty gods and great protectors of the kingship, grant a hundred years of life to the King, and multiply the slaves and the children of the King, my Lord ! The gold which the Privy Councillor (*tukulluw*) and the Mayor of the Palace (*aha-hikal*) made me pay in the month of Teshri, three talents of pure gold and four talents of pure gold,[84] into the hands of the *rab-daninu*, to make the statue of the King (and the statue of the King's mother), has not been given to the workmen. Let the King, my Lord, give order to the Privy Councillor and to the Mayor of the Palace to restore the gold, and to give it within a month from now to the soldiers, and let them do it exactly." [85] The officials had been impaled, and the statue must be finished by this time.

In the presence of the peoples assembled for his victorious return, and all the princes whom he had

conquered and brought to live in captivity in Babylon, the kings and princes of Tyre, Judah, Hijaz, Egypt, and Elam, it would be set up on the hillock of Dura, to the south of Babylon, overlooking the whole plain of Mesopotamia.[86] He would have no inscription.

As he careered over the sand of the Syrian Desert, the golden dust already made an aureole round him. Swifter than his chariot, Rumour with the hundred tongues had reached Babylon, crying his victories aloud. The sands gave place to green plains, dotted with flowers and enlivened by running water. Seething life appeared on all sides—peasants bent over the fertile soil, dense flocks of sheep, droves of cattle. Nebuchadnezzar halted his chariot before that picture of the wealth of his kingdom. But what were those dark masses, far away, slowly moving over the wide green extent from north and south and east and west, all converging on Babylon? They were the princes, the governors, the captains, the judges, the treasurers, the councillors, the sheriffs, and all the rulers of the provinces,[87] whom Bel-shum-ishkun had convoked for the dedication of the divine statue of their sovereign. Across the plain, Nebuchadnezzar saw a golden Nebuchadnezzar flashing in the sun. Round its feet, the people crowded in a silent, innumerable throng. At every moment, the gates of the city emitted other enthusiastic crowds. From all the temples, shrines came forth, borne on the shoulders of the priests; all the gods of Babylonia, with Bel and Marduk at their head, were coming to consecrate Nebuchadnezzar's glory and to share in his splendour.

As Nebuchadnezzar came near, the acclamations, yelled from thousands of adoring throats, filled the plain.

"In the time of the King, my God,
Old men leapt, children sang,
Maidens rejoiced,
And women bore boys and girls, in their joy.
Those who had been sick many days lived,
The hungry were fed, and the thin became fat." [88]

While the smoke of the censers rose in blue trees into the sky, and the blood of whole flocks flowed on the gold tables, the shouting of the people swept like the storms of the Sea of the Rising Sun.

"That which has not been done in the heavens,
The King my Lord does it on earth, and makes us to see it."

At the feet of the statue, the peoples lay prostrate in the dust, while women held out their new-born babies to it, and screamed out their names, Nebuchadnezzar-is-God, Nebuchadnezzar-is-my-Sun, Nebuchadnezzar-is-my-Creator.

Nebuchadnezzar the God was alone on the terrace of his Palace. Beyond the horizon, he seemed to see the whole world living round Babylon, which had become its centre, and worshipping him. Like a gigantic octopus, Babylon stretched her tentacles over the whole earth. On the north road, an endless string of her caravans crawled towards Ecbatana, the capital of his Medic rival; from Ecbatana they went eastward through the Caspian Gates, until they came to Herat; there they parted, some making for Bactria and others for India by Kabul; here again they divided, some going to the heart of the land of riches by Peucela and Taxila, to Patna on the Ganges and to Bactriana and the Jaxartes.[89] Other caravans went westward towards the Mediterranean, first up the Euphrates to Anthemusia, where they were more numerous than ever, now that Arabia was ruined, and thence westwards by numbers of smaller tracks which spread out fanwise to Phœnicia, Judah, Moab, and down to Pelusium in Egypt, flooding those countries with Babylonian goods. A last route, going further up the river, led the horses and camels which carried the wealth of India, now all pouring into Babylon, to Syria and through Cilicia and Phrygia to Sardis and those strange Greeks.[90]

Furthermore, Babylon now had at her disposal beaches and ports on every one of the seas which had once been monopolized by the ships of her enemies. The Chaldæan ports were rich, too, whereas those of Phœnicia and the Egyptian Delta were ruined. As for those of the Red Sea and Arabia, the mere memory of his campaign sufficed to keep them deserted for ever; no traffic would bring life to them save with his permission and for his own purposes.

It was quite difficult to remember the changing frontiers of the Empire. Nebuchadnezzar's tired eyes returned to his capital, which lay sprawling in colossal opulence within the great walls which defied every attack. The last rays of the sun were flashing on the copper and gold and silver domes of the fifty-four temples [91] which he had built to all the gods, who were but attributes of his one god, Bel, and Marduk the son of Bel, the protectors of his kingship. To their glory, the two ziggurats rose resplendent, with the battlements of black, white, purple, blue, scarlet, silver, and gold marking their lofty stages.[92] The sun was an enormous red disk on the skyline, and all things were merged in a dazzling radiance of furnace-red and incandescent violet. Blinded, Nebuchadnezzar had to lower his eyes, but his whole being stood up in a great impulse of pride and joy, and he sent up the supreme cry of his heart: "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of my kingship by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?" [93]

Suddenly the sun vanished. Everything turned dark before the King, and he shivered. His city and his empire were perishing in the grey of dust and ashes.

[1] Maspero, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, pp. 518–19, 529.

[2] Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 33 ff.; Hdt., i, 73–4, 129; Radet, *La Lydie au temps des Mermnades*, p. 204.

[3] Inscription on the Prism of Nabonidus, col. x, ll. 1–21, and Maspero, quoted above.

[4] Radet, *La Lydie*, pp. 193, 196.

[5] Hdt., i, 73–4.

[6] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 529.

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 528.

[8] Hugo Berger, *Die Geographie der Ionien*, Leipzig, 1887. The second map of which we hear was that made by Aristagoras for Cleomenes of Sparta.

[9] Saglio, art. "Cælatura", in *Dic. des Antiquités*, vol. i, p. 790, pt. ii.

[10] Pausanias, viii, 14–18.

[11] Hdt., i, 23–4; Radet, *La Lydie*, pp. 196 ff.

[12] See the whole of the end of Radet's admirable work, quoted above.

[13] Euripides, *Bacchæ*.

[14] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 530.

[15] See Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, pp. 294 ff.

[16] See Kammerer, *Pétra et la Nabatène*, ch. iii, "Les Nabatéens rouliers du désert (pistes antiques et territoire)," pp. 32 ff., where the author discusses the Indian trade in particular. Petra was the capital of Nabatene, and stood in a stony desert just half-way between the head of the Ælanitic Gulf (the present Gulf of Aqaba) and the south end of the Dead Sea. It began as a mere halt for camelmen, for its wealth from the start came from the caravan-traffic. Down to the first century of our era, the goods of India, in which there was a very active trade in the Mediterranean world, came to the town almost entirely from the ports of Aden and Canneh, on the south coast of Arabia on the Indian Ocean, where they were loaded on to camels. In the journey to the Mediterranean they had to be unloaded and loaded again sixty-five times. The Nabatæans took charge of all caravans at the southern end of their kingdom, at al-Hajr or Madain Salih,

and sent them, at their own responsibility and to their own profit, to the north or eastwards to the Persian Gulf.

The boundaries of Nabatene extended to the heart of the Hijaz, southward to al-Hajr and eastward to the Arabian and Syro-Mesopotamian deserts. Tema, which Nabonidus made into a second capital of Babylonia, was in the possession of the Nabatæans (*op. cit.*, p. 71).

[17] "The produce of India which was unloaded in the Arabian ports before the Greeks attempted direct navigation to that distant country consisted of Indian copal, colours and varnishes, various aromatic plants, balsams, benzoins, medical gums, such as cinnabar (dragon's-blood), certain fine woollen materials from the Ganges, and precious woods, such as sandal, teak, and ebony, from Burma or Siam. We have much information about the trade and navigation of the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean from an anonymous Greek traveller who, about A.D. 60, wrote the *Periplus of the Erythræan Sea*, which supplements what we learn from a work of Agatharchides of the middle of the second century B.C. It has been translated by Schoff (New York, 1912)" (Kammerer, p. 40).

[18] Ctesias states that they came from the great mountain which contained the mines furnishing onyx, sardonyx, and other precious stones used for seal-rings, and that these stones were to be found on the fringe of the great sandy desert, in which, ten days' journey from the edge, there was a temple of the Sun.

According to Heeren, these mountains must have been on the borders of Lesser Bukhara.

[19] Theophrastos, who adds: "The largest emerald of the kind known as Bactrian is at Tyre, in the Temple of Heracles. It is quite a large pillar." Herodotos speaks of the same pillar in the Temple of Heracles of Tyre: "I saw two pillars, one of solid gold and the other of emeralds, shining in the dark."

[20] Pearls were fished in the Marratu Sea (the Persian Gulf). Nearchos remarks that they were there fished in the same way as off India. Arrian (*Indica*, 154) says that Indian tradition had it that the practice was founded by Heracles. The Indian pearl-fisheries were between Ceylon and C. Comorin.

[21] Herodotos states that when Xerxes invaded Greece he took an immense number of dogs with him. They came, according to Ctesias (*Ind.*, 5), from the district of India whence the precious stones came. Tritantæchmes, Satrap of Babylon, made four villages in his district provide for the maintenance of his Indian hunting-dogs, and let them off all other taxes (Hdt., i, 192).

[22] Thunberg, 1.

[23] Ezek., xvii, 4.

[24] We are able to reconstruct the route from the account of it

which Arrian obtained from Nearchos, who sailed with Alexander's fleet from the mouths of the Indus to the Persian Gulf.

[25] What people had possession of this sea-borne trade? Did the Indians come to the Persian Gulf? Or did Babylonian and Phœnician mariners fetch the goods from India? The latter suggestion is the more probable, since the Chaldæans and the Phœnicians took part in this traffic in turn. "The men of Dedan" (i.e., al-Ala, as will be seen below, n. 40) "were thy traffickers. They went to great countries, and they brought thee in exchange horns of ivory and ebony" (Ezek., xxvii, 15). So it is clear what happened. The men of Dedan carried Phœnician goods to India and exchanged them for the products of the country. Then they returned home, and it was then that the "travelling companies of Dedanim" of which Isaiah speaks (xxi, 13), gathered on the shores of Arabia, to go over the desert to Babylon or the towns of the Phœnician coast.

[26] Kammerer, p. 35, n. 1. At this time Aden had the position in commerce afterwards held by Alexandria in the Eastern Mediterranean. Aden was known from very early times. Ezekiel calls it Eden (xxvii, 23). In Greek times it was called Eudæmon, or "Fortunate".

Canneh, 200 miles east of Aden, was the port of the kingdom of the Hadhramaut.

[27] These works of Nebuchadnezzar did not last long. Less than a hundred years after they were executed, they had become useless (Heeren).

[28] For Nabonidus at Tema, his new capital in Arabia, see Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 105, 138 ff.

[29] Kammerer, p. 67. In certain periods the Persian Gulf plays as important a part in Indian trade as the route by Arabia. It was always regarded as a place through which riches passed. Moreover, it had the pearl-fisheries of the Tylos (Bahrain) Islands. This explains the interest which Alexander the Great took in it, and the reconnaissance which he ordered his admiral Nearchos to make. Arrian, who wrote in the second century B.C., tells us that his object was to found a great port on the Euphrates and "to place Greek colonies all along the Persian Gulf, fit to vie in riches with Phœnicia". It is true that his preparations were mainly directed against the Arabs, who had not submitted to him. Two hundred years later, the Gulf still had an Arabian commercial centre, among the Gerrhæans.

[30] For Nebuchadnezzar's Arabian campaign, see Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. vi, p. 417, and vol. iv, pp. 399 ff.; Maspero, vol. iii, p. 559.

[31] Reclus, *Géographie universelle*, vol. ix, pp. 827 ff.

[32] Pliny, *Natural History*, xii, 32, 5. Ammianus Marcellinus,

Strabo, and Ptolemy speak of the dangers and difficulties of the caravan-traffic.

[33] See Lenormant, vol. vi, pp. 364–72.

[34] Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 379, and see the map in this volume.

[35] Dougherty, pp. 138 ff. The Aramaic inscription of the Tema Stone proves that Tema was on the way from Egypt to Babylonia. The town, which was visited in 1848 by Wallin, stood 3,400 feet above the sea, and in the sixth century B.C. it was as important as Babylon. There the roads fork for Petra, Gerrha, and Sheba (see Jaussen and Savignac, *Missions archéologiques en Arabie*, vol. ii, p. 109). When Nabonidus again attempted the conquest of Arabia, he slew the King of Tema and established himself in his city. Was this in order to protect the kingdom of Babylon from Egyptian invasion? Or to link up with Egypt against Cyrus? Or merely to secure the extension of the Empire? Nabonidus was doubtless guided by all these motives, and also by the wish to organize Arabia better, the country being nominally subject to his empire but really in a constant state of revolt. Commercial reasons also weighed with him. Smith states that Tiglath-pileser had already thought of obtaining absolute control of the trade-routes across Edom and the southern countries. Nabonidus resided at Tema for eight years, from the 3rd year of his reign to the 11th, and his court remained there until the 17th year of his reign. This explains the strategic and political importance which Nebuchadnezzar attached to Tema previously.

[36] Lenormant, vol. vi, pp. 372–419.

[37] The following caravan-routes are given by the ancient historians. One ran from Muscat, the port at the entrance of the Persian Gulf, along the coast of the Gulf to Kharja near the mouth of the Euphrates. Another went across from Gerrha on the Persian Gulf through Tema to Madian on the Gulf of Aqaba. Another, well-known, started from Sheba and went north by Jidda through the Hijaz to Maan among the Nabatæans. Another, equally used, ran from Canneh to Haran on the Red Sea and then up the coast to Ezion-geber, and another ran parallel to it, further inland. Many other smaller tracks branched off from these.

[38] Caussin de Perceval. These nomadic tribes were utterly ignorant, and had learned nothing from the great civilizations, with which they came but little into contact. They could not write; all information, orders, etc., were conveyed by word of mouth. It was not until the sixth century after Christ that the Arabs of the Hijaz and Najd became at all familiar with writing. These tribes were much prone to *nikath-al-makt* ("odious

marriages", between men and their stepmothers) and *wa'd-al-binat* (the burial of girls alive).

[39] Ezek., xxvii, 21–3, 16. A.V. and R.V. say "Syria" for "Edom".

[40] Ezek., xxvii, 20. "Traffic from India, after crossing the whole of Arabia Felix, the Yaman, the Hijaz, after reaching Mecca, after halting at Medina, came, still proceeding northward, to al-Ala, probably the Dedan of the Bible. There it came into contact with the Nabato-Aramæan world" (Kammerer, p. 48). With regard to this identification of the country of Dedan, which is mentioned several times in the Bible, he continues: "The caravans from Aden did not go further than al-Ala, a small oasis 625 miles from Damascus and 200 from Medina, now called Haraibah. This is no other than the Biblical land of Dedan. The identity of the two places is evident from an inscription found at al-Ala, which runs as follows: 'Stele of Aws'il, son of al-Wahab of Yafa'ar, who died at Dedan in the month of Tanafat under the Kabir (prime minister) Aytam of Arakan.' Dedan appears as a place-name in a score of inscriptions from the region, with the names of kings" (p. 221).

Before the present century, historians seem to have identified Dedan with the seaboard of the Persian Gulf north of Gerrha; see, e.g., Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. vi, the map of Arabia.

Al-Ala was in the very south of Nabatene, and stood at 3,280 feet, in the long ravine from the Hijaz which was an artery of the caravan-traffic.

[41] Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 419.

[42] "The Hijaz is 'the land of separation', either because its mountains separate the seaboard from the interior, or because it lies between Syria and the Yaman, or because it is broken up by its mountain massifs and ranges into a multitude of separate valleys. . . . There, as in Midian, granitic formations and rocks of secondary origin are interrupted by beds of lava.

"The music of the sand can be heard there, as in many other desert regions. Passing one of these small singing hills, southeast of the port of Yanbu, Fulgence Fresnel was informed by the bedouins that the mysterious voice was that of souls shut up till the Day of Judgement. In Midian, the Arabs sacrifice lambs under these hills, the music of which is like the sound of the wind in the strings of a harp.

"In some parts of the Hijaz, the sides of the plateau are very gentle, and the ground has not a mountainous appearance. . . . The highest mountain, Bani Sufyan, cannot be less than 8,200 feet high. In these high mountains, one might imagine oneself transported to the Apennines or Balkans. Running water chatters in the gorges between the blocks of granite, the rocks

are covered with fresh turf dotted with flowers, and the little houses are shaded by fruit-trees. It is surprising to see dusty camels and tanned bedouins going by in the midst of these pleasant landscapes, which might have been made for the shepherds and flocks of Arcadia. In the southern part of the Hijaz (Tihama, Asir), the crests are projections of granite, on which lie sandstone and limestone, and here and there a sheet of basalt. . . . Here snow is seen in winter, and the streams on the upper slopes are even fringed with icicles in April. . . .

" Only two of the cols are sufficiently easy to climb for the Egyptians of Mehemet Ali to have used them in their expedition ; the other gaps in the mountains are only passed by the tribesmen who live on the two sides, who are used to climbing " (Elisée Reclus, *Géographie universelle*).

[43] Lenormant, vol. vi. The only national tie between the Ishmaelite and Joktanite Arabs was the pilgrimage to the Caaba. Diodoros shows the Caaba as already well-known in the time of Cæsar, and Arabian traditions associate it with Adam ; indeed, they say that he merely brought it down to earth from heaven, where it was worshipped by the angels.

The temple was a very small rectangular building, 20 by 22 cubits, with drystone walls 9 cubits high and flat terrace roofs made of palm-trunks and supported by square wooden pillars which were arranged in a manner recalling the sanctuaries of Cyprus. Palm-groves stood around. The Black Stone, which for the Arabs was the only symbol of the gods, was outside the temple, in a niche in a corner, where the faithful could kiss it. In it dwelt Astarte, and also Hobal, the God of Destiny.

[44] The caravans of the Yaman, conducted by men of Midian or Edom, moved north, keeping a short distance from the sea, as far as Mecca, then passed through Selah in the country of the Edomites, and so came to Phœnicia through Moab and Ammon. " The traffickers of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy traffickers ; they traded for thy wares with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones, and gold. Haran and Canneh and Eden, the traffickers of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy traffickers " (Ezek., xxvii, 22–3).

[45] Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 384. The castles of the Crown were Salhin, Ghumdan, Raidan, and Zhafar, which was the appanage of the King's eldest son. Amran and Haran were commercial towns.

[46] Caussin de Perceval, vol. i, p. 75.

[47] Kammerer, in *Pétra et la Nabatène*, tells us of the legal organization of the caravans in ancient times and the profits brought by trade to the countries through which it passed. We have a customs-tariff of Palmyra of the time of Hadrian, a

Græco-Aramaic document giving the tariff laid down by a decree of the Senate of the city. Two similar documents are known, and there must certainly have been some such tariff at Petra, although no evidence has yet been discovered. The Decree of the Senate of Palmyra, given in ordinary session on the 18th of Nisan of the year 448 (18 April, A.D. 137), gives a complete tariff, bearing on the usual articles—perfumes, purple, foodstuffs, animals, slaves. Prostitutes are taxed by the engagement.

[48] Tabari.

[49] Ezek., xxvi, 3–9.

[50] " If there is an interesting spectacle, it is that of the peaceful colonization of nations. The colonies of great empires are mere military settlements; those of trading peoples, on the other hand, have caused civilization to advance greatly. Greed for conquests is contrary to the interests of a commercial people; only a good understanding with the foreigner can open ports to it and bring it commodities " (Heeren, *De la politique des peuples de l'antiquité*, vol. ii).

[51] See Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 471; Heeren, *op. cit.*, vol. ii, ch. i.

[52] Probably the Tarshish of the Bible.

[53] Strabo, iii, p. 175. " The Tyrians ventured on even bolder voyages, and braved the waves of the Atlantic to fetch tin from the Cornish mines. The metal was brought to the Mediterranean by river, and this traffic was a source of wealth to several Gallic tribes, going up the Seine, and, after a short journey across country, down the Saône and the Rhone. On this route stood the town of Alesia, in the mountains separating the basins of the Seine and Saône. It was said to have been founded by Heracles or Melkart, the great Tyrian god " (Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 528; Diod., iii, 61).

It was the constant maxim of the Phœnicians to attach more importance to the thing which stood for goods than to the goods themselves, and to take possessions of countries rich in gold and silver in preference to any other. They therefore spared no effort.

[54] Strabo, iii. This daring adventure was unprecedented, and never repeated in ancient times. Certain Phœnician mariners in the pay of Pharaoh Necho started from the Red Sea, and returned to the Mediterranean through the Pillars of Heracles, having gone right round Africa through seas unexplored by man until Vasco da Gama made the same voyage in the opposite direction.

On this voyage, the Phœnicians saw something which surprised them in their ignorance of cosmography, but is the best possible proof that they really accomplished their amazing enterprise. Describing the voyage, Herodotos says (iv, 42): " It is

known that Africa is surrounded by sea on all sides save for the isthmus connecting it with Asia. . . . On their return, the Phœnicians said—what I can hardly believe—that when sailing round Africa they had the sun on their right" (i.e., the north).

The voyage bore no results, and the knowledge which it should have provided was very soon forgotten.

[55] Lenormant, vol. vi, p. 528.

[56] Ezek., xxvi, 7–17.

[57] Ezek., xxviii, 13.

[58] Brugsch, *Geographische Inschriften*, vol. i, p. 150. The chief town of the district of Takens, now Kenus, was Kens on the island of Konosso, near Philæ. See the inscription (in Plessis, *Les Prophéties d'Ézéchiel contre l'Égypte*) from the statue in the Louvre. From this inscription it appears that, in the reign of Apries, Asiatics and peoples from north of Egypt invaded far into Upper Egypt, besieged Elephantine, and in that city damaged the Temple of Khnum, where Nes-Hor afterwards set up his statue. They could not go beyond the First Cataract, and Nes-Hor forced them back, but they had fulfilled Ezekiel's prophecy by making "the land of Egypt utterly waste and desolate even unto the border of Ethiopia" (xxix, 10).

[59] Lenormant, *Études accadiennes*, ii, 1, p. 94. But we know very little about Babylonian divination by fire.

[60] "The livers of animals being regarded as the seat of life, the examination of this organ would allow one to see there, as in a mirror, the intentions of the god who had accepted the offering of the animal sacrificed. Still, it was necessary for the practice of hepatoscopy to choose an unblemished animal, and to immolate it under the conditions prescribed in the ritual, varying with the hours of the day. At dawn, for instance, it was an ewe that the deity accepted most readily. . . . The victim immolated, the share of the god was composed of the right leg, the kidneys, and a roast. A manual enumerated the signs which the soothsayer might discover in the liver, and determined which were favourable or unfavourable. Observations bearing upon events befalling the dynasty of Agade have survived, and the British Museum possesses a clay liver divided into fifty compartments, corresponding to as many different signs" (Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 153–4).

[61] "Lecanomancy was still easier. According to the position and form which a drop of oil let fall into a jar of water might take, the soothsayer without hesitation would tell whether the sick man, about whom he was consulted, would recover or die, whether the enterprise in view would succeed or would fail" (*ibid.*, p. 154).

[62] Oppert was the first to translate the fragments of the great

treatise on terrestrial omens, in the *Journal Asiatique*, 6th ser., xviii, p. 449.

[63] Omens drawn from monstrous births of animals were infallible. Had not the death of the representative of the gods, Nergalorosor, been foretold by the birth of a foal without any hair on its tail? (W.A.I., iii, 65 ff.)

[64] The historical sources for this last campaign of the old King are as follows. Summaries of them are given, with comments, by Lenormant, Maspero, King, and Smith; Delaporte (*Mesopotamia*, pp. 58–9); *Babylonian Chronicles*, published by Pinches; Josephus, *Ant. Jud.*, x, 2, 1, quoting the evidence of Berosus and Megasthenes, *id.*, *In Apionem*, i, 19–20, and frag. xx in *F.H.G.*, vol. ii; Strabo, i, 16; Abydenos in *F.H.G.*, vol. iv, frags. viii–ix, p. 283; Jer., xliv, 30, xlvi, 25, and xliii.

The *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iii, p. 215, comments on the fragment of the *Babylonian Chronicle* published by Pinches, which was found in 1878 in a collection purchased by the British Museum.

[65] Plessis, *Les Prophéties d'Ézéchiel contre l'Égypte*, p. 106.

[66] Vigouroux, *Dic. de la Bible*, vol. v, col. 29. It was at this same spot that Pompey was treacherously murdered in 48 B.C.

[67] The Daphnæ of the classical writers, 16 Roman miles from Pelusium.

[68] Renan, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, vol. iii, pp. 374 ff. On the whole, the Jewish colony at Tahpanhes were not very obedient to the orders of Jeremiah. To explain to his hearers the blessings which seemed to be heaped on the idolatrous Egyptians, while the Jews were so miserable, Jeremiah had told them, on the very first day he settled in Lower Egypt, that Apries would perish and would be dethroned by Nebuchadnezzar (Jer., xliv, 30).

[69] Jer., xliii, 8–13.

[70] Wiedemann, "Nebucadnezar und Ægypten", in *Zeitschr. f. aegyptische Sprache*, 1878, p. 88; Schrader, "Weitere Bermerkungen zu der . . . Nebucadnezar-Inschrift", *ibid.*, 1879, p. 46. The Babylonian monuments give us information about this Egyptian campaign, supplementing what we learn from the inscription of Nes-Hor. A clay tablet, inscribed on both sides, now in the British Museum, has been published by Strassmaier, *Bab. Texte*, no. 129, p. 6, 1–13. It has been damaged by time, but one can still read the passages which I have introduced into my narrative.

According to Maspero (vol. iii, p. 559) and the *Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. iii, p. 215), Nebuchadnezzar invaded the Nile valley and made Egypt a Babylonian province with Amasis as Satrap. He is said to have made his soldiers build a "Babylon" near the great pyramids, little thinking that this new

Babylon would stand beneath the fixed gaze of the Sphinx longer than his own imperial city. A fragment of annals discovered by Pinches gives the date of this campaign as the 37th year of Nebuchadnezzar's reign.

[71] Hdt., ii, 30, 154; Vigouroux, *Dic. de la Bible*, vol. v, col. 1991.

[72] Strassmaier, *Bab. Texte*, vi, no. 329, p. 194.

[73] Flinders Petrie, "Pharaoh's House at Tahpanhes", in *The Times*, 18 June, 1886. The place to which Jeremiah refers was an area, 98 by 59 feet, paved with brick over the sand, in front of the palace entrance at the eastern corner. This palace was destroyed by fire.

[74] Strassmaier, vi, no. 329, p. 194. "Misir" is the word used, being the Babylonian form of the Assyrian name for Egypt, corresponding to the Hebrew Mizraim.

[75] Kammerer, *Pétra*, pp. 59, 61, 270. The Egyptian Babylon, on the site of the present Cairo, was a masterpiece of military architecture—a quadrilateral, with thick towers at the corners and forming redans. Standing at the point where the Red Sea Canal left the Nile, it protected Chaldæan trade in the Delta. The *Cambridge Ancient History* refers to "the tradition that certain Babylonian deserters built a 'Babylon' in Egypt near the Pyramids, which appears to have existed as an important fort in the time of Augustus" (vol. iii, p. 215).

[76] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 65. Many rulers, of whom we have authentic documents, enjoyed the prerogatives of godhead, even during their lifetime.

[77] Contenau, *Archéologie orientale*. The notion of a close connexion between the gods and the King was established in Sumerian times. It was a consequence, one might say a continuation, of the belief in the mythical dynasties in which kings, heroes, and even gods were found together. In very early times Eannatum of Lagash declared himself the Nursling of Ninkharsag and husband of Inanna (both goddesses). Lugalzaggisi, too, was the son of the goddess Nidaba and nursling of Ninkharsag.

[78] Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*. The glorious days of the first Babylonian dynasties of Sargon had returned. The texts then showed that many of his subjects were called Sargon-ilu, "Sargon-is-my-God", and the like.

[79] Thureau-Dangin, *Les Inscriptions de Sumer et d'Akkad*, Statue B of Gudea: "The statue before thee is the statue of Gudea, Patesi of Lagash. Whosoever shall cause him to come out of Eninnu or shall wipe out his inscription or shall break it, or shall take away my name and set his name there, whosoever shall desert the offerings before the temple of Ningirsu, my King

. . . may Anu, Bel, Enki, Ningirsu, King of the Host, Nina, Mother of Lagash, Bau herself, Queen of Battles, change his destiny! May they break his days as of an ox! May they cast down his violent strength to the ground as of a wild bull! May they lay his throne in the dust. May his god have no eyes for the ills of his people. May the rains of heaven be turned away. May he go away like a man without a name. May his line be subdued. May that man be cursed of the gods of His Majesty the Lord Ningirsu!"

[80] Eduard Meyer, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, p. 195.

[81] Dhorme, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

[82] Lenormant, *La Divination chez les Chaldéens*, p. 193.

[83] I have followed the Book of Daniel, although Diodoros (ii, 9) states that these statues were 12 cubits high.

[84] Altogether, 7 talents of pure gold, i.e., something over 4 cwt.

[85] Tablet K 538 in the British Museum, from the library of Nineveh. It really refers to Ashurbanipal, but I have applied it to Nebuchadnezzar.

[86] This famous statue has not survived, but Jules Oppert, in his *Expédition en Mésopotamie*, vol. i, p. 239, states that if one starts from Babylon and goes 5 miles southwards, crossing the Nahr-Dura, one comes upon a mound, 20 feet high, forming a square with a base of 46 feet, named al-Mukhattat. It is orientated to the four cardinal points, and is higher at the corners than in the centre, so that on going up one finds oneself between four blocks of masonry, which previously formed only one. The whole is built of unbaked bricks, 6 inches thick. When one sees this mound, one is struck by its resemblance to the pedestal of a colossal statue, such as that of Bavaria, near Munich. So one is led to believe that the statue of which the Book of Daniel speaks was erected here.

[87] Daniel, iii, 2.

[88] Dhorme, *La Religion*, p. 172.

[89] Lenormant, vol. iv; Heeren, *De la politique et du commerce dans l'antiquité*, vol. ii, ch. ii, pp. 244 ff.

[90] On these roads, according to Herodotos, there were royal hostels at which travellers could lodge. There were 1,100 between Susa and Sardis.

[91] See above, ch. iii.

[92] Paul Lorquet, *L'Art et l'histoire*, pp. 205–13.

[93] Dan., iv, 30.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SUN-GOD IN BUSINESS

In the half-light of a grey dawn, the flat countryside stretched out tediously to an invisible horizon, repeating *ad infinitum*, as in a dull mirror, prospects devoid of any attraction. Dusty paths followed windings which could only have been produced by caprice on the part of men or beasts, for they were deflected by no obstacle and beckoned by no goal, unless it were the desire to escape from the general flatness and straightness of nature. The waters of the Euphrates spread in a wide, muddy, formless marsh, regardless of banks and dikes—a lifeless lake, but nevertheless one which gave life to all Babylonia by fertilizing its soil—dead water, not even enlivened by a reflection in that bare region.

Two men were walking along one of the paths; one was Gimil-Marduk, a minister of Nebuchadnezzar,[1] and the other was his scribe and servant. They were talking with animation in the lingering gloom, but their keen tones awoke no echo, and were lost in the boundlessness of the landscape, the vagueness of shapes, the woolliness of thoughts and beliefs, the instability of time and space.

Then the sun rose. Shamash, in his splendour, appeared at the lower edge of the heavenly dome, and gradually moved southward and upward along the track traced by Marduk. The dreary plain was brought to life by the play of the growing light. The horizon became a clear purple line. The winding paths had a fantastic, roving air. The somnolent

marsh woke up, and all about the river, now better disciplined and running faster, little streams made a network of silver. Tall, sturdy grasses waved in the morning breeze, while flying hares, gazelles, and wild asses made wide, dark troughs in their surface. From reed huts with pointed roofs herds of goats rushed out and scattered, pursued by the barking of dogs.

The two travellers remained indifferent to these rural beauties. They hastened their step on the path, which became wider and was presently filled with a horde of men and beasts. Bees hummed, and the sun warmed the clayey earth without yet burning it too fiercely. A dust-coloured wall rose above the plain —a great terrace of hard mud, from twenty to thirty feet in height, defying the floods of the Euphrates. It was crowned by a surrounding wall of brick, the Ul-ru-a or Eternal One,[2] battlemented and strengthened by square towers. This was Sippar, the city of Shamash, offering itself wholly to its Lord. Eager to justify its ideogram, " the City of the Plain of the Sun ", Sippar rose glowing above a desert of red sand and purplish water.[3] Gimil-Marduk and his servant prostrated themselves in the dust to do homage to Babbar-Shamash,[4] " the Light of his fathers, the gods ", who, flaming behind the city, furiously drove along the mountain range which encircled the earth in his chariot, drawn by wild asses whose hams never tired.[5]

From the countless water-channels surrounding the city, a light mist rose to heaven like incense in honour of the god who was lord of the earth, the city, and the waters, to Shamash, " judge of the land and arbiter of its laws ",[6] who, with the beneficent light and heat, dispensed truth and justice in plenty. He was greeted by the hymns of men :

> " Sun, thou risest on the foundations of the skies,
> Thou drawest the bolts which bar the starry skies,
> Thou openest the door of the skies ! " [7]

And the date-palms reared their tops high into the air, like censers swinging to the rhythm of the hymns.

Gimil-Marduk and the scribe rose and made for one of the eight gates in the outer wall. Sheep, goats, donkeys, men, and waggons laden with fruit and vegetables were pouring into the gate pell-mell. There was a terrific block in the space in front, which was enclosed between two low towers, and it was still worse in the large paved court which led to the vaulted passage, fifty yards long, by which the city was entered.[8] Gimil-Marduk gave it up, and went further along the wall.

It was a difficult mission, with which his master had entrusted him. Sippar was the most ancient city in Babylonia. When Marduk, the local god of Babylon, had been set up as the supreme "Bel" by order of Hammurabi, who, with his protection, had made the country of Sumer and Akkad into one kingdom under the rule of Babylon, Sippar had remained faithful to its own god Shamash. For over two thousand years, Shamash had made his city supreme in trade and finance.

When Nebuchadnezzar had ordered his minister to ask for the accounts of the Shangu-Sippar, the priest-prince of the city, and the *guepu*, his governor, he had been well aware that the proud, rich city was perturbed by the increased glory and wealth which his victories had brought to Babylon and its god Marduk. Confident in its inviolable position on the river,[9] jealous of its worship of Shamash, its special laws, and above all of the treasury which made it the most important business centre in the world, Sippar had always quietly and stubbornly opposed Babylon, even going so far, at times, as to welcome the enemies of Babylon, for the greater profit of its treasury. Both sides owed Sippar money, and it therefore claimed to stand above the struggle for supremacy in Asia. As against the conquering imperialism of Nebuchadnezzar, it prac-

tised that financial imperialism, with its pretence of broadmindedness, which we have seen in our own time. Setting interest above glory, it was the " honest broker ", richly rewarded for its good offices and its treacheries alike.[10]

Gimil-Marduk stopped again, to look at the city. It seemed a small place to have so much power; he could see its whole extent from where he stood. It was two cities in one—the city of temples, dedicated to Shamash, and that which was called after Ishtar, the evening star which heralded the rising of the moon and the morning star which preceded the sunrise.[11] Within the walls, there were not more than between twelve and fifteen thousand inhabitants in the two cities together.[12] Their power was based on a tradition thousands of years old. As early as the time of the eleven kings of the First Dynasty of Babylon, who had ruled Chaldæa for three hundred and four years, the Sun-god had advanced loans from his treasury to the inhabitants of Sippar, chiefly for seedtime and harvest.[13] " Shamash, the Great Lord in Sippar, which Sutu, the wicked enemy, had overthrown in the troubles and disorders of Akkad, the King of Babylon established his regular offerings, and Ekur-shum-ushabshi, the Priest of Sippar, the soothsayer, he settled there."

The travellers came to another gate, Abullu-Anzakar, which was rendered impracticable for waggons and beasts by a flight of eleven steps. Two gigantic human-headed bulls guarded the archway on either side, with their bodies in profile along the walls and their faces and chests turned towards the front. These were the mystic guardians of the city, who protected it against enemies and also against bad luck and evil spirits. Their mitres supported a heavy arch, adorned by a band of enamelled bricks. Above, winged genies stood facing each other in pairs.[14]

Gimil-Marduk did not explore the popular quarter

SHAMASH OF SIPPAR

Stele of Nabu-apal-iddina. From Lenormant

[*face p.* 316

of reed cabins and low houses of unbaked brick, huddled under their conical domes in the Assyrian manner. He had something better to do. Even before he thought of carrying out the orders of his master Nebuchadnezzar, he wanted to send a tender greeting to his sweetheart, since he had not been able to wait and receive her in Babylon. He went along the inside of the walls, where the inns at which strangers lodged and the *bit-sinarim*, or wine-shops, were.[15] Early as it was, one of them was open and full of noise—the only respect in which it differed from the other houses, which were all plain blocks crowded together, with fronts of mud above a few courses of bricks.

He entered a large rectangular court. Merchants and scribes were gathered round a well in the centre, shaded by a sycamore, discussing business and dictating contracts, orders, and receipts. The rooms of the surrounding stories were equally busy, with the arrival and departure of guests who had come to do business with Shamash and his priests. There were rents to be paid in the form of tribute and contributions in kind, loans of money to be requested, leases to be obtained, terms to be discussed for the stock or material required for agriculture. For the Chaldæan predecessor of Mercury was not content, like the Græco-Roman god, to be the patron of traders and thieves; he was the god of merchants, bankers, cattle-dealers, and sellers of corn, and in addition took an active part in business on his own account. So the temple of Shamash at Sippar is the oldest financial establishment in the world; its foundation, under the style of "the Sun-god", went back to the twenty-sixth century before our era, and it lasted three or four thousand years.[16]

Paying no heed to the haggling merchants, Gimil-Marduk made for the common hall, a low apartment situated near the large rooms which served as warehouses for goods. He sat down at a remote table with

his scribe, who, at his bidding, took his finest clay tablet and, holding his stylus at a slant and pressing lightly, in the proper way, took down a message from his master's lips. It was the eternal complaint of the anxious lover. "To Bibea let it be said from me, Gimil-Marduk: May Shamash and Marduk, for love of me, make you live for ever! I send to learn news of your health. Here am I, tied at Sippar, and I have not seen you, and I am very uneasy. Send me news of your arrival, that I may rejoice. Come in the month of Arahsamna. May you live for ever, for love of me!" [17]

But there was no time for dreaming, and Gimil-Marduk hurried to the temple. As he and his companion went on, the traffic became thicker, vehicles mixed with pedestrians. The pure Semitic type of the nobles contrasted with the infinite diversity of the faces of the middle and lower classes. That diversity made Gimil-Marduk feel proud, for it bore witness to the conquests of his master and his forbears. They had brought into exile and had acclimatized peoples of all races, to the advantage of the kingdom—Hebrews from Samaria and Jerusalem, like that man there with the strongly-marked profile, Medes from Ecbatana, like that other with the fair hair and blue eyes, and Arabs, the inveterate nomads, whose faces were all fine but very varied.

The houses were now less crowded and more handsome. They were faced, not with coloured mud, but with enamelled bricks, in designs inspired by Assyrian and Hittite art. The doors in the arched doorways were of superior kinds of wood—sometimes cedar—and more richly decorated, though they were all very low, and were the only openings in the outer walls, save for a few narrow windows right at the top.[18]

Hidden in an island of green, a "Kiru-Anunitum", famous in the city for its profusion of fruit and flowers, was a more richly decorated building, which, in

Hammurabi's time, had been the abode of Narabtu, the wealthy heiress of Abupiam, a priestess whom Shamash had particularly loved for her beauty.[19] It stood at the corner of an open space, on three sides of which all the quarters of the city converged, while the fourth was occupied by the city of the temple on its brick platform, with a long curving road separating it from the other quarters along its whole length.

Here the movement was busier than ever. Waggons, cattle, and men were almost invisible in a cloud of golden dust. They disappeared into wide double doors, the bronze leaves of which were kept open by a bolt driven into the pavement. It was the 12th of Iyyar, the anniversary of the sacred day on which Tiglath-pileser and Esarhaddon had abdicated in favour of their sons ;[20] on the same date, Labashi-Marduk would one day ascend the throne. Obedient to a tradition which he had no desire to neglect, the High Priest of Sippar had ordered all the citizens and business-establishments of the town to deliver cattle, fodder, corn, dates, honey, oil, iron, copper, and ingots of silver and gold ; nor had anyone dreamed of failing to do so. It was only right that the god who protected the city should not only have a fine temple but should be given, together with his priesthood, regular revenues worthy of his great favours, and that these should include, not only all that was needful for his daily subsistence, but also slaves, cultivated land, and precious metals.

Somewhat lower than the temple, by the Lip-paru Canal by which Hammurabi had connected the Euphrates and the Tigris, Gimil-Marduk saw the Bit-saga, the Houses of the Treasure. To think of all the gold, and silver, and copper, and lapis-lazuli, and precious and semi-precious stones, and valuable woods, which lay heaped in those sacred warehouses with the tempting names ! So abundant were those riches, that the curse inscribed behind the statue of

Shamash against any who should lay sacrilegious hands on them did not seem nearly strong enough to Gimil-Marduk.

> "He shall be slain like an ox in the midst of his prosperity, and felled like a wild bison in the fulness of his strength! May that man, like every man that does ill to his lord, find no resting-place, far and wide, under the dome of the heavens, in whatsoever city it may be!" [21]

But as he watched the crowd surging through the gates of the city of temples, some driving oxen, horses, and sheep, others staggering under sacks of gold and silver ingots, others clearing a way for waggons laden with sacks of corn and flour and jars of oil, Gimil-Marduk reflected that the piety of the faithful could very soon fill up any holes which might be made in the budget of the temples by the sword of an enemy or the rapacity of an unscrupulous ruler. All that was saved was increased by able business methods, under the wideawake administration of the priesthood and the religious congregations attached to the service of the god, and it constituted an indestructible source of revenue. That revenue was amply sufficient for the needs of the god and the upkeep of his ministers.[22] Shamash was an owner and lessor of land, men, and beasts, a trader, a manufacturer, and a banker who accepted deposits at interest and granted loans, with or without pledge or security. Who could compete with him in finance, commerce, or manufacture? The land, the buildings, the slaves, the serfs, the cattle, the money, the raw materials, which he sold, hired out, or lent at very high rates of interest, had come into his treasury as free gifts. There was no risk of loss; everything was clear profit.

Gimil-Marduk entered the city of temples by the Bab-Kaleku, a gate more particularly reserved for offerings. Priests stood under the dark archway, among whom the *shangu*, recognizable by his mitre and wig, was receiving the deliveries and the *kepu*,

by his side, was checking them and seeing that the scribes of the religious congregations of the temple made a correct inventory on their tablets of the wealth thus coming in to increase the power of the god and their own influence. Just as Gimil-Marduk went in, the *kepu* was counting a herd of oxen. These were the tax of cattle which Shamash had required from the municipality, and the scribes entered on their lists: "Two entire bulls to Shamash; two entire bulls to Malik; a cow to Bunene; a cow to the Queen of Sippar; one to Anunitum; one to Gula; one to Adad; one to the God of the Weapon; one to the Goddess of the Weapon."

Following the train of the faithful and their beasts and waggons, Gimil-Marduk made his way with difficulty through a network of streets among the houses allotted to the priests, congregations, serfs, slaves, warehouses, workshops, harems, and schools of the god, not to mention the colleges of religious prostitutes, male and female.[23] So he came to the most illustrious of the temples, the ziggurat of which topped the whole city, casting its great shadow over it to the west. On the broad foundation which contained its treasury, Eparra, the House of the Sun, rose in seven stories, adorned with glistening square tiles bonded with bitumen. The huge "Mountain of God" had an air of harmonious power, which was enhanced by the inward slope of the heavily buttressed walls.[24]

The large inner court was full of activity. Worshippers, tenant-farmers, scribes, and slaves went to and fro continually between the storehouses and the offices. The little sanctuary far up in the sky owed its divine importance to that solid foundation of material wealth. The business-like Chaldæan could only conceive of divinity as the supreme type of human prosperity. To him, it justified itself by wealth, success, and the financial supremacy which made every

worshipper a debtor, a tenant, or a serf of the god. The temple was revered in proportion to its commercial activity.

Gimil-Marduk, who had entered one of the offices, was surprised to find, amid the hubbub of transactions, that dealings were by no means all above-board in the divine Exchange. A scribe read over the following curious document to a farmer, who placed his seal on the clay: "An entire bull, three years old, was sold by Nabu-nadin-akhi, son of Nergal-adin, to the Temple of Eparra for half a mina, but he has not received payment. The bull is for breeding purposes. In the presence of Nabu-Bel-utsur, the 12th Iyyar of the 42nd year of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon." [25]

When the temple wished to dispose of goods presented to it or bought by it, it would stimulate the fever of speculation by imaginary sales, which enabled it to raise the price. It bought on the best possible terms; before the same scribe, a farmer sold the temple ten rams for eighteen drachmas, or about half-a-crown apiece.[26]

All this feverish agitation showed the true character of Sippar, the business capital of the ancient world. Its lofty ziggurat might be a place of prayer, but it was above all the central bank which controlled the whole economic activity of the country and of the lands beyond its borders. This position it owed to the power of its wealth, real and movable, for its treasury was richer even than that of the King. The skill displayed by its priesthood in developing credit, and therefore the private business of its subjects, and therefore its own profits, remained without equal until twenty-five centuries later, when British imperialism was based mainly on the City and the Stock Exchange, and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, Wall Street, serving the policy of the United States, established their economic dominion over a world weakened by war.

Nor could Gimil-Marduk have any doubts as to the impulse which could be given to trade and industry by the system of partnership such as we know it. Near by, two notables were making the following solemn declaration before a priest and a scribe in the presence of seventeen witnesses : " Erib-Sin and Nur-Shamash formed a partnership. They came to the temple of Shamash to draw up the project. All silver, goods, and slaves, male and female, belonging to them, indoors or out of doors, were shared by both together. They realized their project. Silver for silver, even to interest, brother will not dispute with brother." [27]

The High Priest of Shamash was a banker, a notary, and a public officer. Under him were *kepus* and *shatammus*, priests whose special duty it was to look after the financial interests of the god like good managers. Through them, in virtue of his fourfold authority, political, religious, judicial, and administrative, he sanctioned the validity of contracts, levying a reasonable fee in the god's name as a commission.

Gimil-Marduk, being a conscientious official, wished to make sure that his master's subjects were not ground down, and that the rates of interest laid down in the Code of Hammurabi—20 per cent. per annum for loans of money and 33 per cent. for loans in kind—were observed.[28] He made discreet inquiries of the scribe about the money-rate, and asked him whether clauses annexed to contracts were not being ignored at the time of signing. Although the Code of Hammurabi went so far as to provide the death-penalty for certain categories of prevarication and usury, definitely involving fraud, skilful drafting might make it possible to evade the law and justify a rate of interest higher or lower than what was legal.

Finance was a dangerous matter when it was mixed up with political or religious objects, for it then exercised too much weight in affairs of state.[29] Earlier

in the present reign, Shamash had adopted a method which was to become familiar in later ages. At the time when Nebuchadnezzar's victories over Egypt and Israel had filled the royal treasury in Babylon and increased its credit, thus drawing capital into Babylon and jeopardizing the ancient financial supremacy of Sippar, the Sun-god had retaliated by reducing the rate of interest on loans granted by his treasury to 15 per cent. for money loans and 20 per cent. for loans in kind.

Gimil-Marduk also wanted to ascertain whether all steps had been taken to protect the treasury of the god against default on the part of its debtors, for Nebuchadnezzar was the god's chief representative on earth,[30] and the high priest of Sippar was only responsible for management. He was surprised to see that the contract regarding the loan granted to Erib-Sin and Nur-Shamash for the formation of their partnership contained no mention of pledge or security. He said so to the scribe, who pointed out that neither of the debtors had a house or land to mortgage.

"That does not matter," Gimil-Marduk answered. "If they have no houses or land, they have some furniture, or at least some household utensils; and if not, they could have given their wives and children as pledges." [31]

The scribe had his answer ready: "May Shamash bless my Lord, but Erib-Sin and Nur-Shamash had already contracted a loan with Itti-Marduk-balatu, the great financier of Sippar. He had demanded as a pledge a mortgage on the house of his debtors and its contents. A clause in the contract stated formally that no other creditor should have a claim on these pledges before the final extinction of the debt to Itti-Marduk-balatu, both principal and interest."

"I see," said Gimil-Marduk. "But could not the door of the house, which is of rare and valuable wood, have been withdrawn from Itti-Marduk-balatu's pledge

in favour of Shamash? That was done in the 21st year of the reign of my Lord the King, when one Babia, with his wife Sha-Nana-shi, borrowed a mina from Nabu-bani-akhi and gave him as a pledge the door of the porter's lodge of the Shalimu Gate." [32]

"My Lord, Itti-Marduk-balatu is a clever man, and he required the door as a pledge with the rest of the house."

"Then could they not persuade Itti-Marduk-balatu to go surety for their debt, at least for the capital, stipulating that the guarantee should take effect only in the case of the debtors' feet being out of the hands of the creditor?" [33]

"May Shamash and Marduk grant prosperity and long life to Itti-Marduk-balatu if he consents!" said the scribe; "but I fear that he is too clever a man to go surety for those who are already his debtors. But if Erib-Sin and Nur-Shamash cannot meet their obligations, we shall summon them before the court of our Lord in Babylon, that they may be made slaves until their debts are paid in full, unless they prefer to take advantage of Article CXVII of the Code, and give their wives or children to be slaves for three years in their place."

"Shamash does not love to cast the mortals who are under his sway into bondage," Gimil-Marduk solemnly replied.[34] "It would be better to persuade the son of Nur-Shamash, who has a highly paid employment at Court, to allow his father to transfer his debt to him. See that the deed is properly drawn up in the legal forms. Let all concerned accept it. So none of them will be able to have it revised afterwards."

"If he were reduced to slavery," the scribe agreed, "Nur-Shamash would soon be able to free himself, for his father in Babylon has formed a partnership with Marduk-Shapik-zeri for the establishment of a business in spices, the profits of which are great." [35]

Satisfied with this, Gimil-Marduk went to the

administrative offices of the temple to perform his mission of inspection. Suddenly a troop of young lads burst into the court, jostling priests, scribes, and worshippers, charging into offerings, and bringing a gust of youth and merriment into that atmosphere of business and bargaining. They came from a building in the bottom story of the ziggurat, over the door of which was this plain inscription:

HE WHO COMES TO THE FRONT RANK IN THIS SCHOOL OF LETTERS WILL ONE DAY SHINE LIKE THE SUN.[36]

One child of evil, seeing the Babylonian walking along with his nose in the air, tripped him up and fled through the crowd, which, so far from disapproving, laughed at Gimil-Marduk's discomfiture. Such insulting treatment of the King's envoy revealed a state of mind likely to scoff at the capital, as a first step, no doubt, to betraying it. The priests of Shamash, who taught here, were responsible, and their responsibility was all the heavier in view of the reputation of the schools of Sippar, which had an influence proportionate to that of the temple itself.

Gimil-Marduk strode through the door from which his assailant had apparently emerged, and found himself in a room surrounded by a library of clay tablets. Some of them went back to the age of Hammurabi. There were copy-books, models of composition, alphabets, dictionaries, summaries of history, arithmetical tables, forms of contracts, and tables of weights and measures. The scale on which curricula and methods were drawn up showed how hard the students were worked, and the turbulence which they displayed out of doors seemed to deserve some indulgence after the efforts required of their young heads. The tablets which had been thrown aside bore the marks of the spatula passed over the damp surface several times, in repeated attempts to condense ideas and figures in precise formulas. There

could hardly be a better beginning of study than to compel the student to condense what he wanted to say, whether in translation or in original work, and to avoid all long-windedness.[37] The *shangu* who was head-master of the school had come up, and he showed Gimil-Marduk a tablet on which one of his pupils had succeeded in cramming twelve lines of writing in a height of one-third of an inch, and those twelve lines contained every possible benediction. It was an amulet, and could be easily worn as a trinket.[38]

Gimil-Marduk promised the *shangu* that he would report his marvellous results to the King, who was proud of the fact that his name contained that of Nabu, the god of letters. He had already inspected for the King a great number of schools. They had been established in every town, great and small, for education ought to be spread; it served the power of Babylon even better than the success of her arms. It was, he said, a more certain and less costly method, to assert one's power by superiority of culture than by military success.[39]

He went on to question the schoolmaster about his methods. They began with the reading and writing of simple signs, with the study of their various phonetic values. Syllabaries, vocabularies, and mnemonics made it possible to rely chiefly on the memory, at an age when the intelligence was still unformed. Then they went on to the composition of common roots and prefixes, then to signs, then to ideograms, and finally to current formulas. After that it was possible to start on a programme of subjects. In the schools of small country towns, instruction was rightly confined to elementary grammar (declensions and conjugations), the four rules of mathematics, weights and measures, and also a few legal and commercial principles. In large centres like Sippar, the programme was more extensive. In addition to the rudiments already mentioned, they

learned religion, astronomy, cosmology, law, history, palæography, and botany, which was the foundation of medicine, though it had to be largely supplemented by magic.

"I admire and I approve", Gimil-Marduk concluded, "the spirit of a father whom I heard even now speaking to his son, your pupil, at the door of your school. He said, 'You were sent to school to be taught letters, and your mother goes every day to the teacher, taking you bread and drink from the house.' They are wise and cultivated people, who cause their beloved child to learn reading and interpretation, with tablet and stylus in hand, in the sanctuary of the gods." [40]

Forgetting all about his insult, he proceeded, this time without incident, to the offices of the temple administration, where he demanded, in the name of his master, to see the High Priest himself, in order to inform him of the mission of inspection which had been entrusted to him, in consequence of complaints received in Babylon. The High Priest was absent, and Shamash-irba, one of the *shangus* on duty, appeared.[41] "May Shamash bless my brother, the envoy of our beloved father Nebuchadnezzar, but the Priest of Sippar, my master, is absent. He was compelled to go to Tyre himself, to conclude a large purchase of purple for the service of the goddess Anunitum." But all was in order, even in his absence, in the management of the treasury. He himself had just written to the High Priest, but it was not on account of the inspection, since he had not known that it was to take place; and he held out a tablet, on which Gimil-Marduk read: [42] "Tablet from Shamash-irba to the Priest of Sippar, my Lord. Every day I pray to Bel and Nabu for the life of my Lord. Prosperity reigns in the temple, the city, and the house of my Lord. All that my Lord desires, I shall cause to be taken to my Lord. Regarding the *tabarri* purple and the purple

of the goddess Anunitum, my Lord should commit no negligence."

Gimil-Marduk diplomatically showed himself satisfied for the time being with the explanation and the alibi. Shamash-irba was eager and obsequious, and offered to guide him through the labyrinth of offices of accounts, correspondence, and records.

First Gimil-Marduk turned his attention to the accounts. This branch by itself took up a great number of rooms and an army of scribes, all working stylus in hand. Purchases and donations were the subject of endless book-keeping. For every new piece of goods, or beast, or tenant acquired by the god, a duplicate of the receipt and one of the deed of sale or gift was handed to the accountants. It was the same with the animals required for the sacrifices, with the food and clothing of the priests and servants, and with the seed lent or given. In addition, a document written by the storekeeper stated the destination of everything that went out of the temple and the authority responsible for sending it.

From all the documents necessitated by these movements of money and goods (far more various than those in which the average modern company deals), the scribes of the priestly administration of Eparra drew up great tables, the ledgers of the divine accounts. Gimil-Marduk leant over one scribe, and watched him filling up the many columns with figures. He was entering the contributions of corn and dates which had to be made to the treasury of Eparra every year by the farmers who rented the land belonging to the Sun-god. These contributions were made proportionate to the area of the land, and that area was itself determined on a scale which varied with the nearest city and the character of the season, in regard to the ratio of corn harvested to seed sown. The scribe explained that, in view of the last bad harvest, a reduction of a sixth had been allowed to all debtors

of the god. Indeed, Gimil-Marduk was disturbed to see, in the " Remarks " column of several tablets, mention of the havoc wrought on the harvest by blight. He requested that the tenants of the districts which had suffered most, Shamash-ballit (Shamash-makes-to-live) and Shamash-malik (Shamash-reigns), should be summoned to the temple, to explain matters to the soothsayers, and that the omens should be consulted in order to cope with the danger.

Further on, as Gimil-Marduk ran through the statistics of sales of real estate—rural properties, palm-groves, gardens, and houses—he observed that the Sun-god was a great landowner. His credit and power had a far more solid foundation in productive land than in ingots of metal, corn, and textiles, which were perishable, and varied in value every year, and, moreover, offered an easy booty to conquerors whose resources were running short. Furthermore, the god made use of all the possibilities offered by exchange, lease, and mortgage to increase his real estate and its return.

Nor did Shamash disdain, in return for his little commission, to place the seal of his authority on the dealings in real property of his worshippers and subjects. The *shangu* conducted Gimil-Marduk to a scribe before whom stood a body of peasants, all very respectful and decent-looking in their best clothes, and bucolically silent in contrast to the din and bustle of that huge factory of contracts and statistics. The scribe was reading to them from a tablet in a loud voice : " Two *sars* and four *gans* of land built upon, next to the house of Shamash-rabi, the son of Shamash-nasir, were bought from the latter by Shamash-bani, son of Kishtu-Ningishzida. He paid the full price, namely, two-thirds of copper and nine shekels of silver. The negotiation is concluded and hearts are satisfied. Neither shall ever make claim on the other. By the names of Shamash and Ai and Marduk they have

sworn." The scribe then noted on the tablet that the contract had been made on the 12th Iyyar of the 19th year of King Nebuchadnezzar II, and, to make things quite sure, he added that it was the glorious year in which the King, in the might of Anu and Bel, had established his right over Judæa, and his hand had cast Zedekiah, the king of the land of Judæa, to the ground.[43] The purchaser and the twelve witnesses were summoned to mark one side of the tablet with their nails, and the scribe wrote opposite each mark, "Nail-mark of Zabudamik," "Nail-mark of Akhua."[44] Then the purchaser, having read over the text of the contract with a mistrustful eye, and having still more carefully weighed the ingots of copper and silver, took his seal, a little cylinder of red jasper which never left him but always hung round his neck like the most precious of jewels, and stamped its impress, which contained the ideogram of Gilgamesh, on the clay. These formalities having been completed, the scribe tendered the oath to the two parties, who took it, swearing by Shamash and Nebuchadnezzar that the transaction was in order.[45]

Gimil-Marduk could wait no longer, for it was growing late. If he wanted to examine the text of the contracts and the accounts in detail, he would have to make a long stay at Sippar, and his interest counselled him to stay away from his master as short a time as possible. Also, his heart called him back to Babylon and his Bibea. An examination of the correspondence received at the temple would give him a clearer notion whether the subjects of Sippar had any cause for complaint against the management of the High Priest.

At his request, then, the *shangu* took him to the offices in which the scribes who dealt with the mail worked. They were quite as numerous as the accounting staff. From the very first tablets at which Gimil-Marduk looked, it was evident that the High Priest had been guilty of gross negligence, mismanage-

ment, and even complicity in certain cases. It must have been in the hope of acquiring the prestige of royalty itself, that he had calmly allowed abuses to go on and injustice to become an institution—so long, that was, as they did not damage his own interests. How it all justified the gloomy bitterness of the employee whose complaints had aroused the attention of the King! "I have dismissed no one. I have not sinned against them. Yet there is nobody on my side. The work which I do, I do it in the midst of wicked men." [46]

The slackness and improvidence of the High Priest stared Gimil-Marduk in the face. Workmen and officials were not paid. "The dates of which my Lord spoke to his servant, my Lord has not yet given. It is one year that you have been putting off this payment. Let my Lord now give these dates, and let him also pay his servant wine and sesame and new . . . If my Lord does not send, the work will be interrupted." [47] So ran a tablet from Bel-uballit to the priest of Sippar, his brother. Next door to it, another tablet showed the natural result of this neglect. "Tablet from Bel-kisir. Every day I pray to Bel and Nabu for the life of my Lord's souls, the length of his days, and the welfare of his heart and body. Since my Lord bade me (do the work), he has not sent (the pay of the workers). . . . All the husbandmen have (therefore) left (work) and are fled." [48]

Gimil-Marduk was meditating salutary punishments, when his anger was diverted by the sight of a tablet which told of a less serious trouble. "Tablet from Bel-iddina to the Priest of Sippar, my brother. May Nabu and Marduk bless my brother. The steward of Ezida has sent to me as follows regarding the ass: 'The money (to pay for it) has been sent. If it please you that my Lord should deliver it to you, send it before I go away for the shearing.' For my part, much as I love him, this ass is too big for me, and does not

please me. I therefore send Suka to my brother with the ass and its harness." [49] Gimil-Marduk broke into a laugh when he discovered from another tablet that Suka had not failed to profit by the situation. In bringing his master's request, he had submitted one on his own account: "May Bel and Nabu decree the prosperity of my father. At this time, since I come and go without an ass, give me an ass to take me away." [50]

But after that there were continual complaints. Gimil-Marduk was quite definitely pleased. These abuses would certainly not be tolerated by Nebuchadnezzar, and he was already thinking with satisfaction of the report which he would make immediately on his return. It could not fail to establish him in the King's favour.

Lost in thought, while the *shangu* lavished bows and valedictions upon him, he returned to the hostelry at which he had stopped in the morning. This time he paid no attention to the masses crowding in the streets and alleys. The slanting rays of the sun, now on its downward path, sent the shadow of the ziggurat across the city and the countryside as if to lay the mark of Shamash on them to the very horizon. In Sippar lay the surest, most stable foundation of the power of Chaldæa. For over three hundred years, the trading city had seen its prosperity increase, while round it the glory of Ur, Lagash, Nineveh, had perished in the insanity of conquests. Would not the turn of Babylon come to-morrow? Power based on supremacy in war could only be short-lived. Civilization grew old like men. All ideals which did not one day fulfil the dreams of prosperity with which mankind deluded itself in order to forget its wretched condition and the precariousness of its endeavours, died in souls disappointed and indifferent. Imposed by force and as a reason of state, and thus brought down from heaven to earth, an ideal became no more than a privilege;

governments and empires destroyed each other and took each other's place to claim the benefit of it. Financiers and men of business alone, profiting by wars and revolutions and caring for national, social, and moral aspirations only to exploit them, increased their privileges with their influence—unless they were themselves infected by the common madness and wished to enjoy a " power " less real than that which was already theirs but more flattering to their vanity.

So, on the way to his inn, Gimil-Marduk found the way to that wisdom, made up of opportunism and realism, which was always the true characteristic of the great Chaldæans. He would not report the High Priest of Sippar to his master the King. It would be more sensible to do a deal with the High Priest, holding as he did the trump card of his mission of inspection, and to purchase from him, on very satisfactory terms, some well-paid office in the service of Shamash.[51] It meant a certain fortune for him and his dear Bibea, waiting there in Babylon.

Once more, now that he had arranged for his future, his heart was given up wholly to his love, and his anxiety was even worse than in the morning, for no news had come from the adored one. On arriving at the inn, he dictated this message to his scribe: " Tablet from Gimil-Marduk to Bibea, my sweet beloved. Every day I pray to Bel and Nabu for the life of the souls and the happiness of the heart of my sweet beloved. Through the protection of the gods . . . have no anxiety for my sake. . . . My gods Bel and Belit pray for me. Why has news of you remained far from me, and why do I see no answer to all the messages which I send? "[52] Then Gimil-Marduk, tired out, fell asleep on the table, to enjoy more vividly his dreams of love and success.

NOTES ON CHAPTER NINE

[1] The name of a royal official who appears in a great number of Neo-Babylonian letters. See Martin, *Lettres contemporaines de Nabuchodonosor*.

[2] Scheil, *Une Saison de fouilles à Sippar*.

[3] The city of Sippar or Sippara, in Sumerian Utkipnunki (the meaning of which is obscure), was supposed by tradition to have existed before the Flood.

[4] Babbar is the Sumerian name of the Sun, Shamash the Semitic name. Shamash (pronounced Shwash) may be the etymological origin of the Greek Zeus (Rawlinson, *On the Religion of the Babylonians*, p. 500).

[5] Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 98–111.

[6] Pinches, "The Antiquities found by M. Rassam at Abu-Habbah" (Sippar), in *Trans. of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, viii, pp. 167–8.

[7] Rawlinson, *Cuneiform Inscriptions of W. Asia*, vol. iv, p. 20.

[8] Scheil, *op. cit.*

[9] *Ibid.* Hammurabi had further strengthened its position by digging the Apparu Canal, 66 feet wide, joining the Euphrates to the Tigris at the gates of the city and bringing a flow of fertilizing water and of goods.

[10] Oppert, "Un Dieu commerçant", in *Comptes-rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions*, 1897.

[11] The Bible (e.g., 2 Kings, xviii, 34) calls the double city "Sepharvaim", i.e. the Sippars. Oppert says that beside Sippar-sa-Shamash, Sippar of the Sun-god, there was Sippar-sa-Anunit, Sippar of the planet Venus.

[12] Oppert, *op. cit.*

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Scheil, *op. cit.*

[15] *Ibid.*

[16] Oppert, *op. cit.*

[17] Extracted, with the mere substitution of the name of Sippar for Babylon, from two letters among the new texts from Sippar given by Scheil in *Recueil de travaux*, vol. xvi, p. 189. The letter, alas, never reached Bibea; that is why we have been able to discover it and to know the kind of love-letter the Babylonian of the time used to write.

[18] Descriptions, based on the excavations of Loftus at Ur and Erech and of Taylor at Eridu, by Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art dans l'antiquité*, vol. ii, pp. 448–9.

[19] Scheil, *Une Saison de fouilles*, p. 25.

[20] Oppert, *op. cit.*, p. 477.

[21] Inscription of Statue B of Gudea in the Louvre. Heuzey-Sarzec, *Découvertes en Chaldée*, pll. xvi-xvii, xix, col. 9, ll. 6–26. It has been translated by Amiaud, *The Inscription of Telloh* (*Records of the Past*, 2nd ser., vol. ii, pp. 86–7).

[22] Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. i, ch. viii, p. 678.

[23] *Ibid.*, p. 576; Rawlinson, *Cun. Inscr. W. Asia*, vol. ii, pl. xvii, col. 1, ll. 11–12.

[24] According to Woolley (*The Sumerians*), these ziggurats, which were of Sumerian origin, would lead one to think that the Sumerians, the forerunners and ancestors of the Chaldæans, were originally a mountain-dwelling people, who worshipped their gods on high places. When they came down into the plain of Southern Mesopotamia, they were faced with a religious difficulty, for they found no hills on which to perform their rites; so, while they were in any case compelled to erect their buildings on artificial platforms to raise them above the swamps and to protect them against floods, a traditional conception of their religion caused them to make artificial mountains for their temples.

[25] The text, which is in Oppert, *op. cit.*, is of the time of Nebuchadnezzar, but I have altered the exact date.

[26] Oppert, *op. cit.* The example was followed in other forms in ancient and modern times. The last great instance of a religious association engaged in trade is furnished by the Jesuits, who, two hundred years ago, acted as intermediaries between the two worlds with extraordinary efficiency.

[27] C. H. W. Johns, *Babylonian and Assyrian Laws, Contracts, and Letters*, 1904, pp. 288–9; Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, p. 117.

[28] Woolley, *The Sumerians*, p. 118.

[29] Nabu-akhe-iddin, a wealthy Babylonian, went into partnership with one Kalba, to whom he supplied servant-women for immoral purposes in return for three-quarters of the receipts (contract of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar in Strassmaier, Nos. 409, 679).

[30] In the second inscription in the Louvre, Hammurabi calls himself "Prophet of Anu, Steward of Bel, *Favoured of Shamash*, Beloved Shepherd of Marduk" (Ménant, in *Recueil de travaux*, vol. ii, p. 79).

[31] Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 129–30.

[32] Strassmaier, *Bab. Texte*, Nbk. 129.

[33] Delaporte, p. 132. "By this legal phrase was understood

the disappearance of the debtor, leaving the creditor powerless to seize his person."

[34] Oppert (*op. cit.*, p. 21) says that there was only one kind of goods in which the Sun-god never traded—the human person. We never find the purchase or sale of slaves effected by the priesthood in the name of Shamash; when the god took slaves among his tenants, he treated them like any other of his subjects. He was no slave-trader.

[35] Strassmaier (*op. cit.*, Nbk. 199, 572, 653) gives details of companies of the same kind, particularly of a deed of association between Marduk-shapik-zeri and Itti-Marduk-balatu for an important spice business. Each party brings in, apart from the capital in money, his slaves, who remain his own property, but are fed and clothed at the cost of the company.

[36] Father Scheil, in an address at the prize-giving at the École Lacordaire (published by Picquoni, 1912), described his emotion when he discovered this inscription on a six-roomed house with a vestibule, during the excavations which he conducted at Sippar in 1892.

[37] Indeed, Delaporte (p. 199) points out that in the Neo-Babylonian period the functions of scribe and temple-administrator were almost always blended, particularly at Sippar, where the *shangu* (temple-administrator) is often mentioned on the tablets, whereas the title of scribe (*dupsharru*) appears very rarely.

[38] Scheil, *op. cit.*

[39] R. C. Thompson, *Late Babylonian Letters*. Fundamentally, the Babylonian was always regarded as unsuited to war. He was essentially a trader, as is proved by the Neo-Babylonian letters published by Thompson. Almost all deal with purchases, sales, credit, or the transport of material. Thompson sees in this unwarlike, commercial character a potent factor in the defeat of Babylon by the Persians.

[40] Scheil, *op. cit.*

[41] An important person in the temple of Sippar at this time.

[42] Fr. Martin, *Lettres néo-babyloniennes*, with introduction, transcription, and translation, 1909, letter No. 208, p. 142.

[43] For similar examples, see the contract of the year of the taking of Isin (Meissner, *Beiträge zum altbabylonischen Privatrecht*, p. 33), and the contract dated "the 10th Kislev of the year in which King Rim-Sin struck the wicked ones" (same text, p. 17).

[44] Oppert, *Un Traité babylonien sur brique*, p. 16.

[45] The oath is characterized by the word *Nis*, followed by the names of the chief god of the city and the King. In Elam the name of the King of Babylon's High Commissioner, Sukkal-mah, was added. We also find the word *luisnum*, which expresses a curse against whoever breaks the oath, "may he be

cursed of Shamash". In Babylon they swore by Marduk, and at Erech by Nannar (CT, vi, 36, and i, 15–17). The practice of confirming deeds by an oath was not confined to sales and exchanges; it was applied to marriage, adoption, the entrusting of maintenance, the institution of an heir, and the enfranchisement of a slave.

[46] Martin, *Lettres néo-babyloniennes*, No. 209.

[47] *Ibid.*

[48] *Ibid.*, No. 54.

[49] *Ibid.*, No. 58.

[50] *Ibid.*, No. 190, altered.

[51] Cuq, *Études sur le droit babylonien*, p. 187, on the sale of a post in a temple. The texts show that those entitled to a post in a temple could sell, give away, or pledge as security for a debt their share in the office or a part of their share. There are examples from Hammurabi to the Persians.

From time immemorial, the High Priest of Sippar had known that it was done. The deeds of Nippur mention the sale, for $13\frac{2}{3}$ shekels of silver, of five days per annum of the office of *pashishu* (the priest charged with the anointing of the sacred vessels and the statues of the gods, for which he was given the oil) in the Temple of Amurru and of fifteen days of a like office in the Temple of Lusallaba. They also mention the exchange of various offices in the Temple of Nusku. The sale was made by the man who held the office. The hides of the victims were a source of revenue; two deeds of Sippar of the time of Abi-eshu contain receipts, one for $37\frac{1}{3}$ hides (the remainder of 131 in the current year) and the other for 131 hides delivered to a furrier. The office brought the purchaser the emoluments which went with it for so many days in the year. Two deeds from Tall Sifr regarding a succession mention, among heritable goods, six days and five days of the revenues of the Temple of Nannar, sixteen days of the Temple of Belit, eight days of the Temple of Gula.

The offices were handed down by hereditary succession, and were divided among heirs; an office as priest of Ninlil for six months is the portion of an eldest son.

[52] Martin, *Lettres néo-babyloniennes*, fragments of No. 6.

CHAPTER TEN

THE MADNESS OF NEBUCHADNEZZAR

BABYLON woke up. The glory of its might was attested by the tremendous piles of temples, stairs, terraces, ramparts, and towers, one block rising above another, all looking more imposing than usual in the pale morning light. Above their rigid lines, the Hanging Gardens were all that the brutal city had of charm and poetry to offer to the gods in gratitude for her increasing prosperity. As the red in the sky widened, and then the sun poured its golden rays on the huge mass, it displayed its wealth with more cynical ostentation.

Lack of sleep had driven Nebuchadnezzar on to the terrace of his Palace. At his feet, monuments and houses, packed together or facing each other with pillared fronts and brick walls and yet more brick walls, seemed to surge in a petrified mass attack. He could barely see the network of streets, already seething with people. An uninterrupted line of heavy waggons poured into the gates from the country, barges glided along the canals, laden to the gunwale, and scribes were busy at the cross-roads. On every side the whole people was feverishly rushing in pursuit of business. From palaces to traders' booths, from temples to markets, wealth flowed with the people, who bought, sold, lent, borrowed, contracted, signed, and haggled everlastingly.

At the same time, two men were talking gloomily in the shadow of the Gate of Ishtar. Gubarru,[1] the young general whom Nebuchadnezzar had recently

placed in charge of the administration of the South Country, had met an old noble, a friend of his father, who was congratulating him on his appointment. Far from trying to escape from the bitterness of the old man, who was talking ironically of the brilliant speculations for which the post gave opportunities and the certainty that the young officer would now be able to advance his fortunes and round off his property, Gubarru lingered with him readily. Age and retirement always incline a man to be censorious and sarcastic; it is more serious when a young man, successful and living a life of luxury, agrees.

Gubarru, who was afterwards to betray his country to Cyrus, King of the Persians, by facilitating the capture of Babylon, uttered a bitter complaint:

"O very wise one, O possessor of intelligence, let thy heart groan!
The heart of God is as far as the inner parts of the heavens.
Wisdom is hard, and men do not understand it.
The offspring of the prince is in all things in the first rank,
Of his progeny the eldest son is cast down,
And the child who comes after finds his remains!
To the madman is born a better son——"

The old man answered sadly:

"Give attention, my friend, and understand my thought.
Men exalt the word of the great man who is skilled in murder.
They disparage the poor man who has done no sin.
They justify the wicked man whose fault is grave.
They drive away the just man who seeks the will of God.
They let the strong take the food of the poor.
They strengthen the mighty.
They destroy the weak man, the rich man drives him away.
And I, who am weak, am persecuted by the mighty." [2]

He counselled Gubarru, nevertheless, to do the will of the gods, who sent death as the punishment of sin; but Gubarru, disillusioned in spite of his youth and his wealth, replied by blaspheming the gods:

"They have offered lies and untruths without ceasing.
They say in noble words what is in favour of the rich man.
Is his wealth diminished? They come to his help.
They ill-treat the weak man, like a thief,
They destroy him in a tremor, they extinguish him like a flame." [3]

Here let us note, in passing, that the ineradicable legend of the madness of Nebuchadnezzar is entirely due to the Book of Daniel, the only source to which all ancient and modern writers refer when speaking of it. The reader will see later how much faith can be attached to the Book of Daniel. The legend owes its credit partly to certain favourable circumstances, the most important of which is the complete silence of the inscriptions of Nebuchadnezzar regarding his activity in the last six years of his life—the longest silence in contemporary annals. The terrible collapse of Babylon, which was more rapid than any other in history, encouraged the belief that Nebuchadnezzar ended his days in gloom and impotence. Later, the interpretation of Column VIII of his great inscription gave reason to believe that for four years he was removed from power.

To-day, in the light of knowledge acquired during 2,500 years, the last sixty of which have been fertile in scientific discoveries, we can, by comparison with the tragic end of other great conquerors and great empires, attempt to reconstruct the last unhappy years of Nebuchadnezzar, with the help of the Babylonian documents.

"Down to the last century, the authenticity of the Book of Daniel was accepted by all, Jewish or Christian," wrote Reuss in 1879 in his commentaries on the Bible. At the end of the eighteenth century, the question was raised, whether this book was not really written in the reign of Antiochos IV Epiphanes, in 167 B.C. It had its detractors and its champions. In any case, the book has come down to us in a deplorable state, and doubts were inspired by a translation which

included words of a language belonging to a time later than Nebuchadnezzar. The extraordinary exactness with which Daniel's prophecies were fulfilled had already awakened mistrust among some scholars. To-day, it seems to be definitely proved that the Book of Daniel [4] was composed in Babylon itself in 167 B.C. by a Jew who had access to excellent historical material, and at a moment when the Jewish people, having been decimated by a terrible persecution, needed some solid moral consolation. Indeed, the book, as we now have it, aims in its first six chapters at proving that Jehovah never abandons those who believe in him (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, for example) and that he punishes the proud but lifts them up again if they repent sincerely (witness the madness of Nebuchadnezzar and his cure).

In any case, the Book of Daniel contains information not found in any other written history, sacred or profane, but confirmed by other evidence.

On the terrace of the Palace, overlooking the capital and its seething activity, Nebuchadnezzar stood motionless.[5] Leaning with his two fists on the coping of the brick parapet, he gazed straight before him. The spectacle at his feet, which bore witness to the reality of his power and glory, did not hold his eyes, which were searching for visions which should better satisfy his anxious spirit. Yet the fulfilment of all his ambitions was there before him. All the conquests of which he had dreamed in his childhood, as one dreams of the fabulous tales of the past, all the triumphs which only the gods could enjoy in uninterrupted succession, at their will, all riches to the utmost limits of the imagination, were his, thanks to the good will of Marduk and his own genius. But in the bottom of his disillusioned heart he doubted the value of all the material glories with which he was fed to satiation. He wished that he could still hope, still desire, and go on

conquering—but not territory, nor treasures, nor even altars, like that of his golden statue, already neglected. All that was vanity.

His pessimism unconsciously echoed that pessimism which, under the Gate of Ishtar, had even now sadly admitted the contradiction between the value attached to a material power, which always had its limits, and the moral and spiritual values which allowed desires to be infinite, since hopes remained unsatisfied until death.

The last time that he had gone out, as his chariot, drawn by eunuchs, had passed the groups of inveterate chatterers who held forth in the cool shade of the gates, he had been painfully struck by the apathy which seemed general in all classes of Babylonian society. Nowhere did he hear an echo of the fierce enthusiasm, the sacred frenzy, which, for the glory of Babylon, the profit of its treasury, and the material interests of its people, had driven him from Nineveh to Carchemish, from Phœnicia to the Nile, from Egypt to Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem to Arabia and Tyre. Through all his conquests, he had always had the satisfaction of feeling his ambition backed by the ever-insatiable appetite of a people which, though naturally disinclined for military glory and obligations, was anxious to accumulate wealth by means of them, to consolidate its political power by financial domination, to secure new markets for its trade, and to make Babylon the bank and trading-centre of the whole world. He was proud to have realized those desires of an entire people, which rapacity had made into an admirable race of soldiers. At the present time, Babylon, thanks to the King and to the commercial genius of his subjects, reigned unchallenged from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean, controlling all the trade which flowed from one to the other and levying a toll on everything that passed.

Having all the glory they desired, the Babylonians

now had but one passion—the thirst for riches which had in the past been merely the means sought by their patriotism and national pride in order to secure their personal freedom and the independence of their country. Business was business; as they extended their interests beyond the frontiers of the Empire into foreign and rival countries, they could no longer trouble about national feeling, and still less about patriotism.

Besides, all over the city, in the streets and in the temples, foreigners were coming to the fore. They were citizens devoid of convictions or feelings, who had been brought into the city by the mass deportations and had lived there at first from constraint and afterwards from habit and considerations of convenience. They expected nothing of it but material satisfactions, and they had gradually watered down and corrupted the vital forces of the nation.

Even the nobility, which had fed the army, the priesthood, and the civil service, and had in the course of two thousand years striven and died for the independence and then the supremacy of Babylon, was growing bored. Babylon no longer needed it. Laden with honours and riches, having nothing to do and having no fears for the future, the aristocracy had nothing more to hope for from its King or its gods. Luxury and pleasure became its sole faith and its sole object in life.

Nebuchadnezzar remembered, however, that, amid the throng which chased after money and pleasure in the streets of the capital and had no thought for anything else, he had seen pale men whose pensive, intense expression revealed a soul indifferent to material things and uplifted by an ideal which rose superior to the chances of fortune and glory. Perhaps true power lay there, in those Jews who, whatever happened, in exaltation and in abasement, in defeat even more than in victory, still believed that they were the chosen people

of their Jehovah, and did not dispute his stern decrees. No doubt Ashpenaz had been right, when he had advised him to exterminate them, every one. Their eyes pursued him, and haunted him in his nightmares.

Ah, they were a long way now from the days when, by the waters of Babylon, they had sat down and wept! Israel did not weep now! Some of her children had become absorbed in the rich and happy people of Babylon,[6] forgetting Jehovah and his prophets; but the great majority, more self-centred than ever in their hates and hopes, and indifferent to the charms of Babylonian science and philosophy, thought no more of anything but the ideal Jerusalem which must be rebuilt. The Jewish people in its exile displayed the same rapture round Ezekiel in Babylon as it had shown round the Temple in Jerusalem. With a faith that nothing could shake,[7] the prophet everlastingly reminded the exiles that Jehovah had made a covenant with them: "Jerusalem and the cities of Judah shall be built again." Since the year 595, Ezekiel's vision of the ideal Temple had taken definite shape. It was to be the seat of a pure theocracy, without civil or military government, under the authority of a Nasi, as a figure-head. The Holy Land was to be recovered and divided into twelve regions according to the twelve Tribes, and from the hills of Jerusalem to the Dead Sea there should be one great orchard of trees which would bear fruit every month in the year. Such would the kingdom be,[8] a source of life and purity for future generations. In Egypt, the aged Jeremiah was speaking the same language, crying: "Lo, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will cause my people to return to the land that I gave to their fathers. Therefore shall they come and sing in the height of Zion. Again I will build thee, and thou shalt be built, O Virgin of Israel,[9] for I have loved thee with an everlasting love."

Nebuchadnezzar no longer dared to leave his Palace, for fear lest he should meet one of those luna-

tics. The fiery eyes of one of them would be suddenly fixed on him from out of the middle of the crowd, and before he could look to see what fate they wished him, they would disappear, leaving in his heart an incomprehensible anguish, far worse than that created by the dark forebodings of his magicians and soothsayers.

For some time, there had been bad omens every day, and with all their science they had not been able to produce any interpretation that was not alarming. Women gave birth to children without ears—a sign of mourning and of the diminution of the country. A strange dog had got into the Palace and raised a sacrilegious leg against the throne—a sign that the King would die and that enemies would divide the kingdom. Other strange dogs had been seen, black ones in the temple and yellow ones in the Palace; therefore the temple was not stable and the Palace would fall. Bitches produced only one puppy at a time in Babylon; therefore the city would be destroyed.[10] The donkey's entrails, examined by the terror-stricken *barus*, were all curved to the left and black and twisted; therefore the god would not allow the frontiers of the kingdom to be extended. Nebuchadnezzar, impressed by these portents, which confirmed his own fears, thought how precarious and empty were the continual conquests which, while they made Babylon supreme, at the same time endangered her future. The proud, conquering, active Chaldæan race was gradually being diluted with alien blood and losing its virtues. The King had by his very genius and victories surrounded his people with foreign elements which all conspired to dissolve and destroy it.[11]

All through the military and civil administration, from top to bottom, there was evidence of appalling disorganization, the result of the very prosperity of the kingdom. Only the other day, Gimil-Marduk's report on his mission to Sippar had shown that, beneath the general prosperity, apathy and incompetence were

eating into the foundations of the kingdom like a deadly disease. Yesterday, Ashpenaz had brought him two letters which made the breaking-up of all his work painfully clear; while luxury was displayed on every side with cynical arrogance, an official had to write begging letters to his relations for food. He had kept the melancholy document. "To my brother be it said: I, Zimi-eram, pray that Shamash and Marduk may make you live for ever. May it be well with you. I send to learn news of your health; tell me of your health. I am stationed here at Dur-Sin, on the River Bitim-Sikirim. Where I live, there is no food to feed me. See, I seal up and send you one third of a shekel of silver. For this money, send me good fish and other provisions." [12]

Desertions were becoming frequent in the army. The force of which Nebuchadnezzar was so proud had no existence except on the official tablets; in reality all formations were incomplete, and the figures shown to the King were carefully cooked. Corresponding to the cry of distress of the official, Nebuchadnezzar remembered the cry of alarm of an officer: "Tablet from Anu-shar-utsur to Nabu-mukin-apli and Nabu-akhe-iddin, my brothers. May Bel and Nabu grant health and life to my brothers every day. Kalbi-Marduk, an officer in command of supplies, brought my soldiers here, because I showed him a watering-point at this place. How many were the soldiers who remained? Alas, only one hundred and twenty of their number! The others had died, or run away, or gone back. Kalbi-Marduk therefore said: 'I shall send a message to Gubarru on this matter.' I said to him, 'Until (I have received) the reports of the civil governors, you will say nothing to Gubarru on the matter. Of the men who are entered to my charge on the roll of Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, none shall be furnished by you to anybody until you are again at full strength. The men who have died, gone back, or

run away shall be replaced. There is no reason that I should inform Gubarru.' " [13]

Nebuchadnezzar felt at a loss.[14] Was his intoxicating omnipotence, to which the gods themselves had had to give their consecration, to come into conflict with another genius or the sovereign will of some other god? He would gladly have fought openly, and would have triumphed again, for he had never known defeat and could not imagine it; but in the presence of this slow, subtle corruption, he felt helpless. It was hard for his pride to accept the thought. Could the great colossus of his empire have feet of clay? Against the Persians, bubbling over with impatience and youthful vigour and suppressed ambition on his frontier, he still felt that he was the master of his fate. But before the disaffection of the Babylonians he trembled, uncertain of the future of the city and his own power.

Already, under the cover of his splendour, intrigue and treason were creeping all round him. He could guess their presence, he could feel it, but when he tried to track them down he chased only phantoms, set up to draw him off the scent, and he could not tell who was on his side and who was deceiving him. What was becoming of his will and his power in their hands? Ever since the fall of Nineveh, two parties had contended for power and striven to exert their influence in his counsels, with the sole object of giving him a successor. On the one side were the descendants of the Kaldus, the military oligarchy who had delivered Babylon from the Assyrian yoke. They rallied round Neriglissar, Nebuchadnezzar's son-in-law, a successful commander who would satisfy their ambitions in serving his own. The others supported the feeble Evil-Merodach, the King's eldest son. He would be a mere toy in the hands of the great priestly families and their dependants, who would thus be able to interfere once more in state matters and, on the pretext of impos-

ing the just will of heaven on the regents of the earth, serve their own interests and gratify their resentments.

What was the use of all his power and all his glory, if he could not fulfil the secret wish of his heart? He had chosen as his successor the one being in his *entourage* who had his genius and his mind—Nabonidus, the son of his love of long ago, Shumua-damqa.[15] For all her eighty years, she was still carrying on as priestess of Sin. What a queen-mother she would have made!

Let but one obstacle appear, which his masterful will could not break down, and all greatness and all reason were gone for Nebuchadnezzar. The mainspring of his activity was broken; when doubt and fear came in, the balance of his strong personality was lost. Everything crumbled away; if he could not do everything, it was better to wish for nothing. At the height of his power, glory, and happiness, Nebuchadnezzar let go of everything that he had loved, of power above all, because he had felt its limitations.

He did not wish to reign any longer. But, if his will could no longer satisfy his ambitions, his pride, still lively in the disorder of his spirit, would have no other ambitions prevailing against his own. So, while he wandered feverishly about the Palace in his disenchantment, heedless of his kingdom and its fate, and darker and more terrible in his prostration than in his wrath, he did not think of abdicating, and his prestige was still so great that no one thought of supplanting him. Neither his son nor his sons-in-law dared to assert their claims (which in any case were neutralized by their mutual opposition), and the Chief Magician, Bel-shum-ishkun, accomplished the will of the gods and exercised the power in the sovereign's name.

What of the madness of Nebuchadnezzar? That is one of those easy explanations in which prophets and philosophers indulge in order to comment on the

vanity of human ambitions. Madness and reason can only be distinguished and defined as a function of the cerebral power which they dispute between them. Is it possible to find a common measure for the aspirations of men? In view of Nebuchadnezzar's genius, one should, perhaps, speak of neurasthenia rather than madness. The historian does not even ask that much. He can only state that, as a fact, the King took no part in the government for four years.[16] A certain lack of mental balance has always been the price paid for omnipotence. Finding nothing left on which to exercise his will-power, Nebuchadnezzar sank into the melancholy of the man who has surpassed the destiny allotted to him. How could his genius fail to be smitten with ataraxia, when he saw, behind the fulfilment of all his ambitions, a destructive ferment created by his very success? A conqueror like Nebuchadnezzar would become unbalanced as soon as he saw, as he was inevitably bound to see, the rot slowly undoing his work before it was completed, and every new conquest bringing a new element of decay and death.

Nebuchadnezzar's so-called madness had its counterpart in history in fits of despair which are not given such an ugly name. Ashurbanipal wrote on brick his bitter disillusionment, heedless of the splendour of Nineveh: "I did well unto god and man. Why have ill-health, misery, and misfortune befallen me? Misery of mind and of flesh bow me down; with cries of woe I bring my days to an end."[17] The Preacher brings us the echo of the melancholy which tormented Solomon at the end of his reign. Were the others mad, too—Xerxes, sunk in debauchery after Salamis, and Alexander, "whose head was turned and whose heart was spoiled" when his army refused to follow him to the Ganges? In later times, the Memoirs of Saint-Simon and the *Mémorial de Sainte-Hélène*[18] again show the bewilderment and collapse of two great conquerors, seeing their ambitions frustrated by a slow dissolution

which they know to be aggravated by their ambitions themselves.

Up and down the lonely Palace, admitting only a few familiars to his presence, Nebuchadnezzar carried the unquiet soul which wore out his body as an over-sharp sword wears out its sheath. Every day his malady grew worse because he could find no assuagement for his anxiety. Why was the world not on the scale of his dreams? Why did the gods allow his work to be endangered, the work which he had only conceived for the glory of Marduk, god of Babylon? And like an obsession, in the breeze in which he sought relief from his fever and in the whisperings of his servants, who shrank out of his sight, he seemed to hear the ancient complaint which his ancestor Laluralim, King of Nippur, had uttered in the last years of his reign, abandoned by the gods and by his subjects.[19] Popular tradition had kept it alive, and it had come to be the expression of all great grief in Babylonia.

"My strength is cast down. I see an evil omen.
On my bed I am made as nothing like an ox.[20]
My tomb is opened, and they have taken my dwelling before I am dead.
The mourning over me is ended. . . .
Misfortune follows after me, as if, O my God, I had not made regular sacrifice,
Like him in whose mouth prayers have ceased.
As for me . . . prayer was my meditation, and sacrifice was my law."

And the supreme question rose to Nebuchadnezzar's lips, as it had to those of Laluralim:

"Who, then, can study the purpose of the gods in heaven?
The counsel of a god, what being of clay will understand it?
How shall men learn the voice of a god?" [21]

In the city and in the Empire, meanwhile, public opinion was becoming disturbed. There were no more conquests, no more resounding proclamations telling the Babylonians of new glories in store. The

royal decrees did not even bear the King's seal. The people stared fixedly at the thick walls of the Palace. What was happening inside to the son of Marduk, the Lord of the World? All kinds of extravagant things were said. Rumours escaped from the Palace and spread to the lanes of the outer suburbs. The prophets of Israel amplified the tale of horrors which glorified their God in that they humbled the pride of their conqueror. The sullen isolation of the King, his fits of dejection, and his accesses of fury all combined to justify the avenging legend.

Nebuchadnezzar himself, indifferent to the anxieties of his people, lamented over the destruction of his dreams of grandeur. His spirit could not accept a failure which his clearsightedness felt to be inevitable. He prowled gloomily about the halls and terraces of his Palace, not like a beast, but like the embodiment of the extreme of human pathos and mortality.

Whether they thought him mad or sick, all his subjects agreed that in any case he had sinned. The gods could not be angry with a man unless he had sinned; sickness was the most just punishment with which they could visit man in expiation of his sins, before his death.[22] Gradually, as further details regarding the King's condition were let out from the Palace, to add to the general consternation, popular feeling rose higher. "Nebuchadnezzar has sinned," the people said. "He has provoked the wrath of the gods, he has exposed himself to all the consequences of the divine anger. Let him expiate his sin, let him make amends. The gods do not wait for death to restore the balance of good and evil by the punishment of the sinner."[23]

Nebuchadnezzar himself, in his solitude, began to groan: "Oppression, agony, fear, and trembling have hunted and torn my desires. I am a sinner, and therefore I am sick." A kind of crystallization slowly took place in his brain. Perhaps this was really the only obstacle to his glory, to the life of his dreams, to the

satisfaction of all his ambitions, both of those which gnawed at him already and of those which would be born of their fulfilment. To humble himself before his god was only to humble himself before his own conscience. His pride would not suffer. So, one morning, secretly, in a dark, closed room, Nebuchadnezzar bowed before the *ashipu*, the priest of purifications, and prayed for pardon of his sins:

"Lord, my sins are many and my faults are grave.
My goddess, my sins are many and my faults are grave.
To the god whom I know or whom I do not know, my sins are many and my faults are grave.
To the goddesses whom I know or whom I do not know, my faults are grave and my sins are many." [24]

Suddenly, his pride revived, and he shouted in anger:

"The sin that I have done, I do not know it.
The fault that I have done, I do not know it."

But, at a gesture from the priest, he abandoned a revolt which he knew to be vain. The rites must be performed. In a low, dull voice he murmured:

"I shall speak of my deed, of my deed of which one must not speak." [25]

For a very long time, lying with his face to the ground, Nebuchadnezzar confessed his insatiable lust of dominion to the scared priest. At times his voice became haughty and masterful; then, as if delivered from his sin, he slowly recited the litanies of repentance and divine pardon.

"May the anger be appeased in the heart of the Lord!
May the god who is angered with me be appeased!
Speak my deliverance, and let thy heart be appeased;
The deliverance of my afflicted body, which is full of trouble and disorder;
The deliverance of my suffering heart, which is full of tears and sighs;
The deliverance of my sad omens, troubled and confused;

The deliverance of my anguished house, which makes complaint;
The deliverance of my soul, which is steeped in tears and sighs!" [26]

He suddenly recalled the words of the admirable prayer of Ashurbanipal; in his youth he had wondered how that proud monarch could have condescended to it: "May the look of tender care which shines in thy eternal face dispel my sadness, and may the wrath and anger of God never come near me. May I be reconciled with him through the forgiveness of my sins, I who am his servant. May thy mighty face come to my succour, may it shine like the sky and cover me with happiness and riches." [27]

The *ashipu* withdrew, but Nebuchadnezzar still remained prostrate with his face to the ground. The faithful Ashpenaz, growing anxious, risked his master's anger by presenting himself humbly before him, and his face lit up when the King spoke to him: [28]
"Slave, listen to me."

"Yes, my Lord, yes."

"Go forthwith and bring me water for my hands and give it to me. I will make an offering to my god."

"Do so, my Lord, do so. He who makes offering to his god has a joyous heart, he makes a loan for a loan."

"No, slave, I will not make an offering to my god."

"Do not do so," answered Ashpenaz, humouring his master. "Do not do so, my Lord. You will teach your god to walk behind you like a dog, if he desires worship of you, or any other thing."

"Slave," said the King again, "listen to me."

"Yes, my Lord, yes."

"Go forthwith and bring me water for my hands, and give it to me. I will eat."

"Eat, my Lord, eat. Begin to eat again, and open your heart. When a man eats with a joyful heart and clean hands, Shamash comes."

"No, slave, I will not eat."

"Do not eat, my Lord, do not eat. To be hungry and eat, to be thirsty and drink, is a necessity for man." [29]

On the following day, Nebuchadnezzar, seeing the High Priest, Bel-shum-ishkun, began rambling again. "Slave, listen to me."

"Yes, my Lord, yes."

"I will make a rebellion."

"Make it, my Lord, make it. If you do not make a rebellion, what joy will you have? Who will then give you what you put in your belly?"

"No, slave, I will not make a rebellion."

"Do not make it, my Lord, do not make it. A man who makes rebellion is a murderer, and either they put out his eyes or they take and cast him in prison." [30]

Nebuchadnezzar's soul was not yet at peace. In the darkness, he sent up his complaint to the god who had not delivered him from his anguish, although he had observed all the moral rules which, since the time of Hammurabi, had governed the conduct of the Babylonians. Like an endless litany, he chanted in a monotonous voice, in time to his heavy tread, the consecrated words of the Negative Confession:

"Has he failed to deliver the captive?
Has he failed to unbind him that was in chains?
Has he said 'Yes' for 'No'?
Has he said 'No' for 'Yes'?
Has he spoken outrageous words?
Has he walked after evil?
Has he transgressed the bounds of righteousness?"
Has he done what is not good?" [31]

All the time, under the walls of the Citadel, a tide of humanity surged round the thick closed doors and, as an accompaniment to his litany, he caught snatches of a dirge which told of the anxiety of his people. But he continued his slow tramp up and down, without heeding it. The thought that the avenging god was

there, at his side, bent on punishing him, haunted him more and more. The definite formation of a fear which had hitherto been vague confined his thoughts in a circle from which they could not escape without wandering. He had a clear, acute sensation of a hostile presence suddenly standing close to him. But who could it be? Marduk? The notion was barely formulated when it took full possession of his mind. Must he pray again and humble himself still further? The cry of distress was cut short on his lips; his pride was not dead, and his wavering will stiffened. He straightened himself once again, with the sensation of being caught in a trap; then, in inexpressible terror, with his brain empty, he fled. He had not sinned, he had not offended against the gods. Love was the only thing which he lacked, the counterbalance needed for his glory. Ashpenaz was there. Panting, Nebuchadnezzar addressed him: "Slave, listen to me."

"Yes, my Lord, yes."

"I will love a woman."

"Love, then, my Lord, love then. A man who loves a woman forgets sadness and affliction."

"No, slave, I will not love a woman."

"Then do not love, my Lord, do not love. A woman is a pit, a stumbling-block, a bottomless trap; a woman is a sharpened sword which cuts a man's neck." [32]

Then it must be Marduk! Into the night which was coming with its retinue of nightmares and torments, the King sent out wails and screams, sobs and shouts, calling the magicians to make the rites of expiation. The sound of his cries ringing through the courts of the Palace brought a host of officials in pursuit of him. As he tried to escape from his phantom fears, which drove him through the long corridors and over the courts and terraces, his torment was increased by the thought of the whispering, frightened throng which he could feel lurking behind him.

A torch shone out in the darkness which was invading the third court, and in the moving circle of light Nebuchadnezzar saw the magicians hastening to the sacred rites. There was a cry, and his foot slipped on the flags, and he felt something warm. It was the blood of a sheep which they had just killed. He peered into the darkness with anxious eyes. Men were there, and women, shadows in the shadow, and the silence of that nameless throng oppressed him even more than the heavy scent of the ointment of Ninurta with which they were all anointed.[33]

He found himself standing alone in the middle of the court. The magician, with his purifying torch in his hand, slowly prostrated himself to the seven altars which had been set up against the high walls and were laden with the dates and honey and hydromel and perfumes of the offering. He again stood in front of the King, and the wine of the libation mingled with the blood of the sheep. The torch made a circle of fire round the priest, and his solemn voice rose into the night in the supreme incantation :

" Mighty storm which goeth over the plain. . . ." [34]

Nebuchadnezzar was no longer afraid ; he was too tired. He let himself fall on to a hard couch in the first room into which he happened to go. He shivered, and closed his eyes. Then once more, as sleep overtook him, fear and nightmares returned to the attack, vivid as ever, until he started into wakefulness.

More days passed and more nights, without his finding peace for his soul or cure for his body. He was insensibly slipping down the slope of a despair from which there was no escape ; he became almost childish.

One morning, he said to Ashpenaz in a piteous voice : " Slave, listen to me." [35]

" Yes, my Lord, yes."

"I will do good to my country."

"Do it, my Lord, do it. A man who does good to his country receives good from Marduk."

"No, slave, I will not do good to my country."

"Do not do it, my Lord. Go up into the ruins of the cities, even of the most ancient. Look at the skulls of those who have died, sooner or later. Who is then the wicked man, and who is the doer of good?"

In a supreme access of despair, the King gripped the terrified Ashpenaz with his two hands and shook him, screaming: "Slave, listen to me!"

"Yes, my Lord, yes."

"Now what good is there?"

"To break my neck and yours, to throw us into the river, that is good! Who is tall enough to rise to the heavens? Who is wide enough to fill the whole earth?"

"No, slave; I shall kill you first and send you before me!"

"Then may my Lord have only three days to live after me!" [36]

Three years went by, during which Nebuchadnezzar fought with his torments like a blind man. "I might have—" he would murmur, not seeing that it was these very doubts of his own making that prevented him from being once more the master of his will and of his fate. Images crowded upon his memory, but he only sought and retained those which caused him to doubt his future, while all the time, in his heart of hearts, he felt that future still alive, and rich in prospects of glory.

At last, one morning, as he stood on the terrace, there came up to him from the crowd which never left his gates, watching by turns, a hymn full of hope and love:

"May the network of the canals be in his possession;
May the mountain which breeds tribes be in his possession;

May the pastures of the desert which breed tribes be in his possession;
The King, the shepherd of his people!
May he hold the sun in his right hand;
May he hold the moon in his left hand;
May the favourable demon and the favourable colossus who rule lordship and kingship
Enter into his body!" [37]

It was the hymn which his subjects had been wont to sing to him in the past, in times of doubt, when the fate of the kingdom was at stake, to tell him of all their trust and gratitude. So his people were still waiting for him, still expecting miracles of him. The nightmare was dispelled. His task was not ended. This blessed day brought him, with the call of his people, the pardon of Marduk.

Leaning on the breast of Ashpenaz, Nebuchadnezzar whispered softly:

"I know a time when my tears are at an end.
Let him who has sinned against Esagila learn from my example."

NOTES ON CHAPTER TEN

[1] Father Scheil speaks of him in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, xi (1914), p. 165. King (*History of Babylon*, p. 281) says that the Gubarru who held a high command in the Babylonian army (mentioned above, p. 347) may possibly be identified with the Gobryas who helped Cyrus to take Babylon; if so, the easy victory of the Persians can be understood.

[2] The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer, often compared to the Book of Job. See *Supplément au Dictionnaire de la Bible*, cols. 829–30; Dhorme, in *Revue Biblique*, 1923, pp. 5–27.

Zimmern considered that the prototype of the Servant of the Lord was to be found in the Babylonian documents. Father Condamin, in his *Livre d'Isaïe*, 1905, p. 342, points out the great fundamental difference: "The Righteous Sufferer does not suffer with resignation or suffer to expiate the sins of others, and that is essentially the character of the Servant of the Lord."

[3] *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément*, published under the direction of Pirot, fascc. i, iii, 1926, col. 830 (Dhorme's translation). Erich Ebeling published a transcription of this curious acrostic poem in 1924. It may, he says, without exaggeration be placed on a level with Ecclesiastes. Father Dhorme (in *Revue Biblique*, 1923, p. 5) says that it is a kind of philosophic dialogue, similar to those in Job. Here Babylonian pessimism attains its height. It is the explanation of the proverb, "Scarce has one seen the day, when he must walk on the road of death and cross Khubur, the river of the Underworld."

[4] Nevertheless, the greatest historians have gone to the Book of Daniel for a picture of Neo-Babylonian civilization, e.g., Rawlinson, *The Five Great Monarchies*.

[5] Various historians give different opinions about the madness of Nebuchadnezzar.

Some, like King and Eduard Meyer, pass over it in absolute silence.

The *Cambridge Ancient History* (vol. iii, p. 217) merely mentions his death, and adds in a footnote: "The name of Nebuchadrezzar became the centre of much romance, notably in the story of his madness in the Book of Daniel," quoting C. H. W. Johns

(*Encyc. Bible*, col. 3371): "His own inscriptions speak only of a four-year-long suspension of interest in public affairs, which may not be a reference to his malady, though tradition of something of the kind may have lent verisimilitude to the account of it in Daniel."

Maspero writes (*Histoire ancienne*, vol. iii, p. 567): "The Jews, pitiless to the conqueror who had overthrown Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple of Solomon, were not satisfied with such a light punishment. They said that after his victories he was intoxicated with his glory to the point of declaring himself equal to God. 'Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of my kingship, by the might of my power and for the honour of my majesty?' And as he spoke a voice from heaven ordered him to be changed into a beast. 'He was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.' He continued in this state for seven years; then he recovered his former shape, and after exalting the God of Israel he resumed possession of the kingship (Dan., iv). And almost all historians are content to reproduce this one passage from the Bible."

Rawlinson (*The Five Great Monarchies*, vol. iii, pp. 502–3) says: "The most remarkable circumstance in Nebuchadnezzar's life remains to be noticed. Towards the close of his reign, when his conquests and probably most of his great works were completed (cf. Dan., iv, 22, 30), in the midst of complete tranquillity and prosperity, a sudden warning was sent him. . . . This malady . . . has been termed 'Lycanthropy'. . . . The great King became a wretched maniac. . . . His subjects generally, it is probable, were not allowed to know of his condition, though they could not but be aware that he was suffering from some terrible malady." He adds in a note, "We must not suppose that the afflicted monarch was allowed to range freely through the country. He was no doubt strictly confined to the private gardens attached to the palace."

Lenormant, in his analysis of the first six chapters of the Book of Daniel (p. 204) regards it as "a case of lycanthropy; there is nothing absolutely impossible in this".

Now for another question: is there evidence proving, not that Nebuchadnezzar went mad, but that he was removed from power? Smith in his *History of Babylonia* (p. 166) says that there is not. But some authors would find it in the famous East India House Inscription, col. viii. The latest and best transcription is that of Langdon in *Building Inscriptions of the Neo-Babylonian Empire*, pt. i, p. 137: "That my royal residence might be in any other city my heart did not desire. In no other place built I an

abode for my government, nor did I place the worthy treasuries of my royalty in any other place. In Babylon, a place of residence worthy of my royalty there was not."

[6] For the excellent material position of the Jews in Babylonia, see Montet, *Histoire du peuple d'Israël*, p. 144; Renan, *Histoire*, vol. iii, pp. 376 ff., 394.

[7] Ezek., xxxvii, end.

[8] Ezek., xl–xlviii.

[9] Jer., xxxi, 4.

[10] Lenormant, *La Divination chez les Chaldéens*, p. 57; *Choix de textes*, Nos. 87 ff.

[11] For the elements of dissolution presented by new elements being absorbed into a nation, see Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, vol. i, chh. i, iii–iv.

[12] *Revue d'Assyriologie.*

[13] Scheil, in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, xi, No. 1914, p. 165. The unpublished text is a document written in Neo-Babylonian on a tablet found at Erech, with 20 lines on the obverse and 24 on the reverse. Three great personages are mentioned in this document. First, there are Nebuchadnezzar and Neriglissar, the mention of whom enables us to date the document before 562, while the fact that they are mentioned on an equality shows the importance which Neriglissar enjoyed at the time. He was the son of Belshum-ishkun, a notable of Babylon. He had married a daughter of Nebuchadnezzar, and he succeeded his brother-in-law Evil-Merodach in 560.

[14] It is a law which may be observed all through history, from Solomon and Nebuchadnezzar to Louis XIV and Napoleon, with Xerxes, Alexander the Great, and the Roman Emperors in between, that a reign which begins brilliantly often ends in disaster. Why? Because the ruler falls ill. The illness takes two forms. Either the hero sinks into brutish dissipation, like Xerxes and Alexander; or a kind of stupor and ataraxia falls on his last years, and he sees the dreams which he thought realized fading away. While the appearance of greatness remains, the ruler has the slow torment of watching the decomposition of his achievement; his clear vision is his torture.

It is a phenomenon of omnipotence that it goes to the head of the man who enjoys it, and since nothing ever opposes his will, he flies into every excess and sinks into dementia. It is a special kind of dementia, which is as deadly to all who come within its range as to the victim himself. Such must have been the end of Ashurbanipal, whose despair is recorded in the inscriptions. This too, so far as we can tell from considering the documents of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, appears to have been the secret of the last obscure years of the Babylonian monarch. His alleged

madness was simply the natural development of the megalomania known as "Cæsarism".

[15] Dhorme, in *Revue Biblique*, 1908, p. 131. The inscription, of the year 537, was discovered by Pognon at Harran, on the site of the Temple of Sin, the Moon-god. The style and writing are those of the reign of Nabonidus, the last King of Babylon. It was engraved by order of a hereditary high priest of the temple, and is in honour of Shumua-damqa herself. It establishes that Nabonidus's mother was a priestess at Harran, that she died in the 9th year of Nabonidus, and that she had a magnificent funeral.

"Sin, for the sake of the love with which I revere his godhead, hears my prayers, and by Nabonidus, the child born of my heart, brought him into his temple.

"Nabonidus, King of Babylon, the son born of my heart, fulfilled the forgotten precepts of Sin. He rebuilt Egipar, the city of Harran, he made it more perfect than before. The hand of Sin, of Nergal, of Marduk he took, to carry them out of Babylon, his royal city, and in the temple of Harran, the dwelling which rejoices the heart, amid rejoicings and cries of joy, he established them.

"Sin, King of the Gods, lifted up my head and gave me a name illustrious in the land. The long days and the years which are the joy of my heart he increases, so that, from Ashurbanipal, King of Assyria, to the 9th year of Nabonidus, King of Babylon, the son born of my heart, one hundred and four holy years in the presence of Sin, King of the Gods, he put in me and he made me live them. As for me, the gaze of my eyes is bright and I enjoy all my wits, my hand and my foot are in a perfect condition, my words are esteemed, and food and drink are agreeable to me, the joy of my heart.

"Every month, without interruption, I don my fine vestments, and fat sheep, and flour, and sesame wine, and oil, and honey, and fruits from the garden Elameku, I offer to them. Moreover, plentiful sacrifices of good smell I have established for them in regular offerings, and I set them before them."

In the 9th year of Nabonidus she died. "Then King Nabonidus, the child born of my heart, the beloved of his mother, caused her to be wrapped in bandages and offered magnificent garments, a shining tunic, sparkling stones, precious stones. With perfumed oil he anointed the body. A guard was set at its sides. He sacrificed fat sheep before her and he gathered together the people of Babylon and Borsippa," etc.

[16] The lycanthropy of Nebuchadnezzar is a fable which has become universal. Open any encyclopædia, and you will find that, according to the Bible, Nebuchadnezzar was smitten with

lycanthropy. Thus Virez, in his *Dictionnaire des sciences médicales*, 1818, vol. xxix, p. 246, s.v. "Lycanthropie": "This name is given to the malady of persons who believe themselves transformed into an animal—wolf, dog, or cat, and sometimes also an ox, as in the case of Nebuchadnezzar." Michaud, in his *Biographie universelle*, writes: "Nebuchadnezzar was punished for his pride by rather a strange malady, for he fell into a state of complete dementia and was persuaded that he had been turned into an ox." Larousse tells the same story, adding, "He died a year after recovering his reason."

[17] *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iii, p. 127.

[18] Napoleon at St. Helena was much annoyed by these allusions to the metamorphosis of the great Asiatic conqueror. In the *Mémorial* he wrote: "It was an infamous libel, but what was to be done? If it should enter anyone's head to-day to publish a statement that I had grown hairy and was walking about on all fours, there are people who would believe it, and would say that God had punished me like Nebuchadnezzar! And what could I do then?"

[19] Pirot, in *Suppl. au Dic. de la Bible*, p. 826.

[20] There had been many earlier cases of lycanthropy. For example, the daughters of Prœtos, King of Argos, a contemporary of Moses, were smitten with leprosy, and thought in their delirium that they had turned into cows. They left the palace and wandered about the wild valleys. To cure them, the herdsman Melampus drove them to the city and made them bathe in the spring of Anigros, whereupon they recovered their wits. Prœtos gave Iphianassa, the eldest, to Melampus in marriage. Diogenes Laërtios relates that the philosopher Heracleitos fell into a melancholy, and had to be shut up. He escaped to the mountains, where he lived on wild plants. Homer describes Bellerophon roaming about the country, eating out his heart.

[21] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, xx (the Righteous Sufferer).

[22] Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, pp. 220 ff. By the side of their depravity, the Babylonians were the most religious people of antiquity, and their morality and liturgy are among the most beautiful. For, surprising as it may seem, they had no morality apart from religion. Just as their religion prescribed their duties towards the gods, so it prescribed their duties towards other men.

[23] Martin, *Textes religieux assyro-babyloniens*, p. 217. The sin of man brings the anger of the god, and the punishment usually consists of sickness. The gods do not wait for death to restore the balance of good and evil by the punishment of the sinner. Those who leave none behind to maintain and prolong their existence beyond the grave are unhappy after death. Sin is

punished in this life by the curse or abandonment of the gods. This morality, which is that of the Righteous Sufferer, is on the whole that of the friends of Job when they try to find out the sin for which he is made to suffer.

If a man has sinned, the best way to deliver himself is to pray (*Choix de textes*, p. 71). Marduk is invoked as he " who gives back life to the dead ". From these texts, then, it seems that the idea of resurrection was known in Babylon.

[24] Dhorme, *La Religion assyro-babylonienne*, p. 237.

[25] *Ibid.*; see also Delaporte, *Mesopotamia*, pp. 161–9.

[26] Dhorme, *op. cit.*

[27] British Museum, Tablet K 163; Lenormant, p. 212.

[28] Langdon in *Babyloniaca*, vii, p. 195. The original of this pessimistic dialogue between master and slave goes back to the twenty-fifth century B.C. It contained a dialogue between a king and one of his wise men. This is the opinion of Langdon, who compares it to the Egyptian " Admonitions of an Old Sage " and the didactic story (also Egyptian) of the Eloquent Peasant. The version used by Langdon is of the ninth century. He compares it to Ecclesiastes, but it is an Ecclesiastes without any hope. The text was on three tablets, found at Ashur. There is a copy in Neo-Babylonian of the first version, which only dates from the Seleucid period.

It deals with eleven points: (i) the folly of seeking the favour of courts; (ii) the absence of any advantage in it; (iii) the unnecessary excitement of a nomadic life; (iv) the futility of revenge; (v) the danger of rebellion; (vi) the uselessness of forgiving; (vii) the calamities brought by the love of women; (viii) the uselessness of making ritual sacrifices; (ix) the fact that good intentions are not appreciated, but are interpreted as treachery; (x) the fact that the ill-doer and the well-doer receive the same reward; (xi) the preferableness of death to life.

[29] *Suppl. au Dic. de la Bible*, col. 834, contains a summary of this interesting dialogue. Louis Pirot, the author, observes that, while the Sapiential books of the Babylonians and of the Jews may be alike in expressing principles which are characteristic of the Semitic mind, this does not at all prove that the Biblical writers drew from Babylonian or Assyrian sources. He points out, however, that as a rule the Babylonian works are earlier than the Biblical works which are like them.

[30] *Babyloniaca*, vii, pp. 195–209. Note how unlike most Babylonian works this queer composition is.

[31] Dhorme, *La Religion*, p. 226.

[32] *Babyloniaca*, vii, p. 195; based on Langdon's translation.

[33] Fossey, *La Magie assyrienne*, pp. 131–2.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 133; *Suppl. au Dic. de la Bible*, cols. 843 ff.

[35] *Babyloniaca*, *loc. cit.*

[36] These lines contain the strongest expression of Babylonian pessimism. The good and the bad lie buried in the ruins of their cities, and their deeds are forgotten. The present generation knows no difference between honour and dishonour. All are now together and equal in the land of No Return. See Langdon.

[37] Lenormant, *Histoire ancienne*, vol. v, p. 26.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

HIS ONE DEFEAT

The luminous hour which precedes the fall of night was gilding the great cedars on the topmost terrace of the Hanging Gardens, but, notwithstanding the loveliness of the light, the great cedars were melancholy. Their verdure had suffered from the four years of interregnum during which they, like other things in the kingdom and in the Palace, had been neglected.

Nebuchadnezzar, bowed by years and by the malady which was sapping him, had come up, as he did every evening, to seek the cool and to forget the cares of government, the reins of which he had taken up again. He, too, was melancholy. His weary eyes roved over the city and the country. The uniformity of the boundless plain, covered with its brilliant carpet of flowers, turned his thoughts to himself, to his youth, in which he had here known his happiest hours of dreams and enthusiasms. Memories of his past life combined with the vast, simple lines of the landscape to fill his soul with emotion. The far horizon, slowly drawing in upon the city with the shadow of night, was like the horizon of his own life, opening great vistas to his desire for the infinite, just when its limits became apparent. How his imagination and his pride had been kindled, barely four years ago, at the sight of these places which had witnessed the glorious history of his kingdom and of his own greatness! The great brick pile, in which palaces and temples, wealth and splendour, rose above the luxuriant plain, spoke to all men of the value of the national energy

which he had so loved. He had hoped to gain immortality by linking his own destiny with that of his people and of a whole world conquered by its invincible arms and its unparalleled civilization. To-night, after a relaxation of his sovereign will which had lasted only four years, everything seemed to present an immense picture of abandonment and melancholy.

As he sat there in the failing light, he felt in his heart that all that power, though still living, was doomed, that it was nearing the dusk like the day itself. In spite of himself, he had listened to the homesick voices of the Jews who had that morning repeated to him, with passionate intensity, the sayings of Jeremiah. In his distant exile by the Nile, the aged prophet held that Babylon had fulfilled the mission entrusted to her by Jehovah; she had exterminated the last kings of Judah, and the sole ruler of hearts and the sole surviving flame of the spirit of Israel was the Word of God, which had not suffered from the exile and tribulations of his people, but had lost all dynastic influence and interest. Henceforward the prophets were alone in Israel, without rivals.

The conquests of Nebuchadnezzar were ended, and Jehovah not only had no more need of his sword, but rose against him as a terrible avenger of the Jews. "Put yourselves in array against Babylon round about! All ye that bear the bow, shoot at her, spare no arrows! And Babylon shall become heaps, a dwelling-place for jackals." [1] So Jeremiah was now crying. Surely it was the death-sentence of Babylon, spoken by the old prophet, who, after he had shouted the exaltation of Babylon on the ruins of Jerusalem, was to-day hailing her downfall. And his voice was echoed by that of a very young prophet, the "Second Isaiah", who was fiercely stripping Babylon of her glory and her virtues to reveal her blemishes and vices. "Come down, and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter

of Babylon; sit on the ground without a throne, O daughter of the Chaldæans; for thou shalt no more be called tender and delicate. Take the millstones, and grind meal. Uncover thy locks, make bare the leg, uncover the thigh, to pass over the rivers. Thy nakedness shall be uncovered; yea, thy shame shall be seen. Sit thou silent, and get thee into darkness, O daughter of the Chaldæans; for thou shalt be no more called the Lady of Kingdoms!" [2]

The sun was now hidden. Above the city, sinking in slumber, the garden, deserted as it was, seemed to take on a new life. Nebuchadnezzar felt his anguish gently dissolving in the perfumes of the acacias and fig-trees. In the peace of the evening, he stared at the red line of the sunset—still dividing earth from heaven—and watched it stretch out and grow more and more slender. He sought his destiny, and already everything was merged in darkness; but before his obstinately fixed gaze a mirage gradually took shape and became definite.

Another Babylon rose, far away on the horizon. There Nabonidus, his favourite son-in-law, reigned,[3] forgetful of the customs and traditions of his people, deserting his gods and their temples for strange gods. Nebuchadnezzar's eyes closed before that vision, floating in the sky like an image of desertion and renunciation. All mirage—dreams and follies. Reality was at his feet, where Babylon lay in the darkness, the mighty citadel, the fortress-capital of his empire, the pedestal of his glory. He anxiously scanned the battlemented walls, one within another, the towers protecting the gates, and the moats, the swamps, and the canals outside. What did the desertion of Nabonidus matter? Babylon still stood, proclaiming the glory of Nebuchadnezzar.

Suddenly his eyes rolled and he stretched out his arms, driving away the blood-stained phantom which rose before him. It was Evil-Merodach, his son.[4]

How pale his face was, under the round tiara of royalty! And that other phantom behind, with its face distorted by ambition and covetousness, was that not Neriglissar, his other son-in-law? He held a dagger, which dripped with the blood of Evil-Merodach. He raised his hand to the brow of the corpse as it fell—and Nebuchadnezzar looked away in horror. But Babylon, the Babylon which he had raised up to be the seat of his sovereignty, by virtue of his might and for the eternal praise of his glory, Babylon, which he had made invincible, against which one must needs bring, not an army, but a people, to besiege it—Babylon would remain inviolate even when abandoned by his successors. The eyes of the old King gratefully followed the winding line of the Euphrates, which he had banked and diverted for the defence of the city, where it gleamed dimly under the night sky.

A cloud passed over the moon, and the light died out of the protecting waters. It must come back! Nebuchadnezzar leaned forward, peering at the hostile shadow. What was that sudden rushing and roaring? It was the wind, blowing in the tops of the great cedars. He must see, see at all costs. What was it? In the Palace, torches flared. His ears drummed; he could hear singing and shouting. What orgy was this? Down by the Euphrates, the deep noise rose, and rose, and came over the walls, and spread, and filled the city, and was already beating at the Palace gates. The King recoiled in horror; the darkness in front of him was deeper, but there was a great light in his mind. The bed of the river was dry; its course had been deflected to the artificial lake of Ardericca, which he had himself dug for the benefit of the city. There was no water in the river, but only armed men, swarming against the high walls. They wore the helmets of Persian bowmen, and they came up and up, while the revelling in the Palace beneath him reached

its height. "Nabonidus! Nabonidus!" he cried. There was no answer. Nabonidus, evacuating Sippar, had fallen into the hands of the Persian advanced guards. Babylon the proud had at her head none but a woman and a feeble child—the King's wife and his son Belshazzar.[5]

"Marduk! Marduk! Save thy capital, this capital which I have built to thy glory!" cried the King. But in Esagila, under the shadow of the ziggurat which he himself had built, higher and richer than any other, to Bel triumphant, who was that foreign prince? It was Cyrus, King of the Persians, and he was taking the hand of the god. And nothing fell, nothing shook. Marduk impassively accepted the rule of the stranger, and twenty-five years had not passed! "Thou too, Marduk, my God," murmured Nebuchadnezzar, closing his eyes.

But his pride rebelled. Let Babylon perish rather than serve as a footstool for a foreign conqueror! He looked in the direction of the city gates, where were the sluices which, by his order, were to be opened in the last resort, that the waters might wash against the walls and gradually bring them down. A new mirage formed before his astonished eyes. Babylon lay, a heap of rubbish—not, however, by the sovereign will of Nebuchadnezzar, but a hundred years later, by the just anger of another King of the Persians, Xerxes, who even violated the tomb of Bel.[6] Of all his glory, of all the activity which he had here displayed, nothing remained but lumpish grey mounds of clay, cracked by the sun and scored by the rains, dark smudges on a waste of sand.[7] All was consummated, and beyond repair. No more would the handsome ziggurats flash back the rays of Shamash and Sin through all the length and breadth of his kingdom. The very ruins were utilized by the conquerors, and in the surrounding country the sand covered everything—canals, fields, and flowers.

A cold wind swept the garden, and he was shaken by a fit of trembling in which his hallucination and his fever mingled. All round the horizon, he could see the desert advancing to bury him, and felt the spell of that infinity in which nothing is real but dreams and mirages. Dreams and mirages—were they not the supreme motive power of hope ever renewed? The wretched little Jewish people, in spite of defeat and destruction, did not give up hope. Rather than to himself, in all his power, did not the future belong to them, who were never disappointed and never despaired?

As his fever rose, the hallucination returned. Beyond the Jerusalem which he had destroyed, he saw the Jerusalem of the future, the ideal city which would be nowhere and everywhere, in the hearts of the Jews, dispersed all over the world. And even when the prophecies of their *nabis* were fulfilled, and their Messiah had come, turning the world upside down, they would deny Him, in order not to close the gate to dreams and hopes. They would go on waiting, and, because nothing would ever discourage them, they would achieve great things—without a capital, or an empire, or a home, they would be the power which drove the world.

Nebuchadnezzar fell down on the terrace, overcome by fever and lack of sleep. As he lay there, the first light of dawn caught the ziggurat, which seemed as if born again for eternity from the depths of time.

He rose with a start, and called Ashpenaz. The whole Court, priests, generals, officials, servants, even slaves, must be brought to the terrace at once. As they assembled in frightened silence, Nebuchadnezzar drew himself up to his full height. A light which was no longer human shone in his eyes, and he spoke in a voice of thunder.

"I, Nebuchadnezzar, O Babylonians, I prophesy to you misfortune which will come, which neither my

father Bel nor the Lady Belit can persuade the Fates to turn aside. A Persian mule will come, having your own gods as his allies, and he will bring bondage upon you. He will be aided by a Mede, the glory of Assyria. Would that, before he betrayed his fellow-countrymen, an abyss or the sea had had him, to destroy him utterly, or that, turning in other paths, he had wandered in the desert where there are neither cities nor paths of men, but the wild beasts live freely and the birds roam, and that he had been lost, alone, in the rocks and the ravines! As for me, may I meet a better end before such a thought enters my mind!" [8]

The old King was exhausted by the effort, and all withdrew. Behind their expressionless faces, behind the passing mask of fear, he saw indifference—indifference to his awful prophecy, which, in view of his recent illness, they doubtless regarded as a sign of madness, and indifference to the future of Babylon, from which they expected nothing but new business under other masters. A dull anger rose in him. He suddenly had a burning, overmastering desire to take hold of them all and to galvanize them into life by his will for fresh conquests. He drew himself up, and suddenly, like a dagger which made him instinctively put his hand to his heart, a sharp, stabbing pain pierced him and flung him broken on the ground. What was the use of struggling? Death was at hand, and he was alone on the platform with his fever and the intolerable pain in his side. Death—that was the final defeat. Would not he, the invincible one, triumph over it? Oh, if only he could continue to exercise his will, for ever!

Day was now fully come, and the line of the horizon and the gentle undulations of the plain could be seen clearly. Nebuchadnezzar looked sadly and wearily from one hillock to another. Which of them would to-morrow receive him? That one? Or that? His eyes dwelt with satisfaction on that which was called

Shadarabi, the Mountain of the North with the sides adorned with gold. That was the entrance to the Land of No Return, dreadful Arallu, the underground kingdom and inevitable home of all who had fulfilled their destiny on earth. Low as it was, its top touched the heavens in which the gods dwelt, the Shadmatati, the mysterious summit, the Summit of the World. There his *ekimmu*[9] would be secure from the unhappy

GILGAMESH.
Chaldæan cylinder, from Lenormant.

roving existence reserved for those who had not been buried. When, in spite of the gods, his time came, as soon as his body had been enclosed in its earthenware coffin to be hidden in the side of the beautiful palace which he had loved,[10] his eternal shade would present itself at the cleft which he thought he could now descry between two rocks.

Since his babyhood, the priests had taught him, like every Babylonian, about his latter end. Over three

thousand years ago, the magicians had obtained the knowledge from the lips of the gods and had written it down on tablets. Those tablets preserved for ever the story of the first hours of the world, when " the gods created the world, setting aside death for mankind and keeping life for themselves ".[11] Even the hero Gilgamesh, the son of the goddess Aruru, before whom kings and princes and the great ones of the earth humbly bowed their head, was not exempt. He had tried to break loose from the common lot, and had shouted his question to heaven :

" Must I die too ?
But I will not die, for I know that I shall never come to life again."

Nebuchadnezzar had no consolation for his mortal anguish but the brutal answer given to the hero :

" The life which thou seekest, thou shalt not find,
For when the gods built mankind they laid death upon it.
They kept life for themselves." [12]

" Whither, then, shall I go, since death awaits me on my bed ? " the hero had asked ; [13] and with his grim determination which knew not despair he had gone over the whole earth in search of the Plant of Life. He had found it, but barely had he done so when a snake stole it from him, and Gilgamesh, losing hope, had had to resign himself to inevitable death.

Nebuchadnezzar thought that he might, like his ancestor Etana, one of the twelve kings of the First Dynasty of Kish, attempt to fly to heaven. He had essayed other wild adventures in his time, and if he was borne aloft by the divine eagle, he would not become giddy, like Etana, who had fallen into Arallu. No, he would not fall ; he would rise, higher and higher, until he was among the gods, in the glory of Shamash and his father Marduk. Yet even Adapa, the son of Ea, who had been given wisdom and divination as his portion, had not received eternal

life.[14] What, on the other hand, was the wisdom of Adapa compared with the glory of Nebuchadnezzar?

Surely Marduk, his father, whom he had served so well, would listen to him; he could "give back life to the dead".[15] But even then there was no certainty. Was Marduk able to force his will on Nergal and the goddess Allatu, who held inexorable sway, among the shades and the night, over all that was left of past generations, making no difference between the righteous man and the wicked?

Perhaps it would be better to renounce Marduk, and ask for immortality from Jehovah, whose prophets had said that Nebuchadnezzar had served his purposes. It was true that the miserable god of the Israelites was not even capable of protecting his own people on this earth. But at least he promised eternal life in the next world, with the resurrection of the soul and body in a splendid kingdom. For centuries, the Hebrew seers had been saying it, in passionate tones which carried the hearer with them. Under the Assyrian invader, a certain Hosea had been the first to cry: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord. After two days he will revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight."[16] After him, the great magician Isaiah had been still more positive: "Thy dead shall live; my dead bodies shall arise! Awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast forth the dead."[17] Lastly, clear and ringing, the word of Jehovah to Ezekiel, his great seer, had come to the ears of Nebuchadnezzar: "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them: O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Behold, I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath in you, and ye shall live."[18] Then Ezekiel, he had been told, had heard a dreadful rustling in the plain, and "the sinews and

the flesh came upon them, and the skin covered them above". And the voice of Jehovah had thundered over the earth: "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, that they may live. And the breath came upon them, and they lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army." Then Jehovah had said: "Behold, I will open up your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves." [19]

But Nebuchadnezzar's eyes were irresistibly drawn back to the little cleft in the distant rocks. On the day that "the destiny of his life should end", he felt that, true to the tradition of his forefathers, there and not in the courts of Jehovah his shade would appear, clad in his finest raiment. So had Ishtar, the daughter of Sin, done when she resolved to go "to the Land of No Return, to the house of darkness, to the house from which he that enters comes not out, to the road whose entrance has no way back".[20]

At the first gate he would say, like Ishtar:

"Ho, there, Porter! Open the gate, that I may enter in!
If thou openest not the gate,
I shall break the bolt, I shall destroy the threshold,
I shall break down the leaves of the door." [21]

The Porter would answer, "Have patience, O my King!" and as he let him in through the first gate he would take off his great crown; and at each of the six other gates another porter would take off some other part of his clothing, for the rites required that he should be "clad like a bird with no garment but his wings" if he wished to hear the words, "Let the seven gates of the Land of No Return be opened to thee." [22]

There would be no light in the abode into which he would come, and he would find only dust and filth to feed and refresh him. In the middle, the "Palace of the Land of No Return" stood, where Nergal dwelt with the goddess Ereshkigal.[23] Both would rejoice to receive him, and would send messengers to

meet him. The Scribe of the Earth, Belit-iri, the "Lady of the Desert", would bow before him, and so would Gibil, the Governor of the Land of No Return, and Ningishzida, the Herald of the Earth, would go before him. In the Palace, the Anunnakis, the evil deities who had determined the end of his life, would be sitting in assembly under the leadership of Mamitu, the goddess of fate, and there they would judge him and assign to him his place in the kingdom of shades.

In the hallucination of his fever, Nebuchadnezzar saw, among the shades who dragged out their joyless existence in that place, all those who had been destroyed by their pride—great men all, with the gods who had rebelled against Marduk at the beginning of the Creation in the front rank, and behind them, pell-mell, "lord and priest, sorcerer and prophet, the anointed of the Great Gods".[24] They all rolled in the dust, remembering nothing of their human life, retaining in the depths of their soul only bitter longing for the light which they had lost. The most wretched were those who had not received burial, or had none to care for them on earth. "Like an old garment, worms devour them."[25] "He for whose shade no man cares, he eats the scrapings of the pot and remnants of food that lie on the street."

It was true, as Nebuchadnezzar knew well, that the least unhappy of these shades were those of men who had fallen in battle. There they were, reclining on couches and drinking water. Their fathers and mothers held up their heads, and their wives bent over them.

But he, Nebuchadnezzar, who had done so many great deeds and such meritorious ones, would receive better treatment even than these heroes. For him, Ea would take some drops of the water which sprang by the threshold of the palace of Allatu and gave life to those who bathed in it or drank of it. Then

Marduk would call him to his side in the heaven of Anu, or in the heaven of Adad, or Shamash, or Sin. There he would find the food and the waters of life, for there, the magicians said, "having recovered all their faculties, the righteous will be bidden to a splendid banquet".[26]

The song which told of the felicity of the righteous man, taking part in the feasts of the gods, rang in the old King's ears:[27]

"Wash thy hands, purify thy hands!
The gods, thy elders, will wash their hands and purify their hands.
Eat the meat on the pure platters,
Drink the pure water in the pure vases,
Prepare thyself to enjoy the peace of the righteous!
Antum, the great wife of Anu, hath held thee in her holy arms;
Itu hath translated thee into a circle of holiness,
He hath poured the magical water into thy mouth,
And the virtue of the water hath opened thy mouth."[28]

Yes, yes! Marduk would crown his glory with the supreme gift of immortality. "Immortal," he murmured, and he saw the ages rolling by, and the world still speaking of his deeds. "Ashpenaz! Ashpenaz!" At the imperious call, Ashpenaz bowed down at his feet, and the King, no longer feeling his malady, drew himself up straight. "I desire," he said, —and he hammered out each word with force—"I desire, Ashpenaz, that there, on the highest terrace of the Citadel, a lion[29] may be set up, the finest and biggest that has ever been carved, a lion whose proud attitude and noble strength shall be worthy of my glory. Under his paw, I wish there to be a prostrate man, as the symbol of the world which I have brought under my law and bent beneath my will. Let a scribe come. I will dictate the inscription which I wish to be engraved on a stele of black basalt, to tell future generations of my glory and that of Marduk, my father."

The scribe came, and Nebuchadnezzar dictated: "I

am Nebuchadnezzar, great and majestic, obedient to Marduk and worshipping Nabu, he who executes the mysterious oracles, according to the worship of that godhead and the reverence of its greatness, he who has bethought him night and day of the restoration of Esagila and Ezida, he who has increased the glory of Babylon and Borsippa, the minister of the gods, the wise man who trusts in their power, the eldest son of Nabopolassar, King of Babylon, I.

"I have maintained respect for the god in distant countries and in the high mountains from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea. They have not left the road of obedience, the path of submission; they have not misunderstood the conditions of defeat nor the duty of paying tribute.

"I have made inaccessible tracks into serviceable roads.

"I have punished froward men. I have arranged the building of Imgur-Bel, the surrounding wall of Babylon the Indestructible, what none of the Kings, my fathers, did before me.

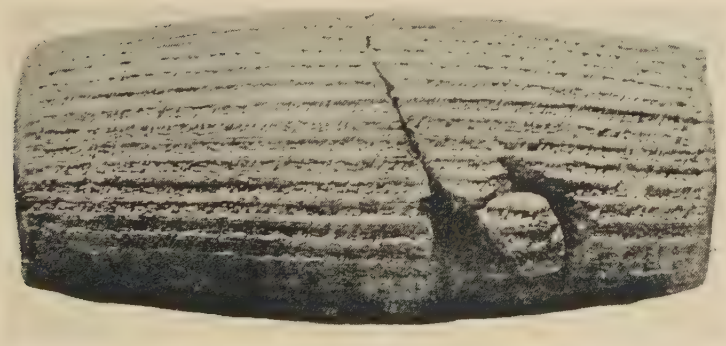
"I am Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he whom Marduk, the Great Lord, appointed for the glory of his city Babylon, I!" [30]

His voice weakened. The pain had come back, and was gnawing at his side. He stretched out his two clenched hands, beating at the air, tottered, and sank in the arms of Ashpenaz. Overhead, the sky had become pitch-black, and the wind bore heavy clouds along, and wakened a long dirge in the tops of the cedars.

Nebuchadnezzar now lay in his small bedroom in the Palace. An eerie grey light fell dismally from the round window in the roof. The thickness of the vault weighed down on his poor tired heart, of which he could feel the dull, irregular beating. All round him, he saw in a blur the familiar things which had been the witnesses of his daily life, his thoughts, and his

THE BASALT LION

From Koldewey



CYLINDER OF CYRUS DESCRIBING HIS UNOPPOSED ENTRANCE INTO BABYLON

British Museum No. 90920

[face p. 380

dreams. He could have wished to move ; if he lifted the red cotton coverlet, the stifling sensation of weight would doubtless go. But he felt that the pain would come back, and that would certainly be death. Death —but it was not possible ; he was only sixty-eight. His task was not completed ; the lion which was to perpetuate his glory was scarcely begun. Premature death only came to punish a crime ; that he knew.

He had not broken his oath to the gods, that they should plague him thus. He murmured : " Prayer was my meditation, and sacrifice was my law. The day on which the gods were honoured was the joy of my heart." Anxiously, he questioned himself : " Has he walked after evil ? Has he transgressed the bounds of righteousness ? Has he done what is not good ? " [31] In his dealings with his neighbour, had he observed the precepts of the gods, which Hammurabi had set forth when " Marduk appointed him to make men walk straight, to give out his law to the world, placing righteousness and law in the mouth of the King " ? [32] What could he answer to the questions : " Has he failed to deliver the captive, to unbind him that was in chains ? Has he said to the jailer, ' Put him in prison,' and to the warder, ' Chain him ' ? Has he refused to let the prisoner see the light of day ? " [33]

Suddenly a fit of shaking seized his whole frame, and he sat up on his bed. Before him there rose the avenging figures of Zedekiah, Jehoiachin, and yet others whom he had kept in chains for many a long year. It was they who had caused the god to allow the evil spirits to do their work, tormenting his body and his conscience. But his pride held out. He would have no remorse, no regrets. Raging, he clenched his hands and his teeth to stifle the cry that rose from his tortured inwards. Ashpenaz heard his hissing protest : " I have served my gods, I regret nothing ! " and in the wan light of the evening he saw

the pain-stricken face of the King contract in terrified obstinacy.

Nebuchadnezzar closed his eyes, and at once a thousand devils rose around him in the darkness.[34] He knew them; they were the spirits who avenged the offended gods, the dreadful *utukkus*. They swarmed in the tiny room. They had rushed in with the storm now raging outside; they were the downpour of Ramman; they came up like the deluge, a thick cloud darkening the sky.

"They are seven, they are seven.
In the hollow of the abyss, they are seven.
They are neither male nor female;
They take no wife; they beget no children.
They know neither pity nor kindness;
They hear neither prayer nor supplication.
They are the messengers of death and the servants of Allatu.[35]
If they meet a man whose god is angry with him,
They fall on him, and fill him with poison,
And bind his hands, and tie his feet, and claw his sides." [36]

Their skeleton figures gathered round the bed, enveloping it with their black wings. Great flat hands at the end of long arms stretched over the King's body, and claw-like fingers dug into his flesh.[37] He could feel their feet, like eagles' talons, closing on his chest. "They ground his heart like meal", while the big round eyes in their ugly faces shone with a sardonic light.

Nebuchadnezzar remembered with agony the diagnosis of his physician: "If on the second day he is sick and on the third day he can rise, or if on the third day he is sick and can rise, in the evening the sickness will be exorcized. If on the third day his heart gives forth a groaning and his inwards are on fire, he will die. If on the fourth day he is sick, and fever with perspiration lays him low, the sickness will be exorcized. If on the fifth day he is sick and on the sixth day blood comes to his mouth, his sickness will

be exorcized. If on the sixth day he wishes to open his eyes and cannot, he will die." [38]

This was the deadly attack. Nebuchadnezzar sat up; he would fight on; and he faced the malevolent

The Demon of the South-west Wind.
From Maspero.

band. "Spittle of bile of the gods!" he screamed at them. He could see lions' heads with manes of snakes rising from jackals' bodies with tails curling back like those of scorpions. Behind the howling throng was Allatu herself, urging them on, more hideous even

than her subjects. Above a woman's body, hairy and misshapen, she had the grinning mask of a lioness, and two wings spread from her shoulders like a sinister veil.[39] At her call, each demon selected a part of Nebuchadnezzar's body. "The evil *ekimmu* fell upon his waist, the evil *gallu* fell upon his hands, the evil *ilu* fell upon his feet,"[40] and the *ashakku* assailed his head, the *utukku* the back of his neck, and the *alu* his chest.

Nebuchadnezzar abandoned the unequal struggle, which exhausted his forces. Did not these fiends attack the gods themselves successfully, and were not the eclipses of the moon the sign of their victories over Sin? He gave up hope. He no longer thought even of his pain; fear destroyed all consciousness in him. Before his eyes, pictures, faces, formed and swirled and vanished, as if carried off by the demons, which shrieked with laughter. The image of Amytis came, clearer and stronger than the others, in answer to the last cry of his heart, which he could no longer feel beating. He recognized the ambergris perfume of the beloved flesh, and heard her soft voice calling him faintly, so faintly that it was like a far-away harp. Then the howling pack of devils again fell on his shattered body. He had been struggling thus for hours. Would they never tire? If only an exorcist could come! He tried to think of protective incantations.

What was that figure over there, more solid in the darkness? The shadow seemed less dense around it, and even the demons made way for it. Nebuchadnezzar heard the voice of the exorcist, rising loud and clear:

"On you I call, Gods of the Night,
And with you I call on the Night, the Veiled Bride;
I call on the Evening, the Midnight, and the Morning.
My joy has become groaning, my faith is but grief.
Arise, Great Gods, hear my complaint,

Do justice to me, take cognizance of my acts!
Let the words of misfortune which have been uttered against me
Melt like tallow at the bidding of the Gods of the Night." [41]

The battle was not yet lost. At the summons of the exorcist, he would receive the sovereign aid of his great gods, Marduk and Nabu. The voice of the priest became more urgent.

" Behold, Marduk enters into the house of his father Ea,
Saying, 'O my father, I know not what this man must do to be healed.'
Ea answers Marduk,
'My son, what should I say to thee that thou dost not know already?
Go, then, my son, take the man to the bath which purifies
And drive away the magic which is on him.'
May that destructive curse of one unknown be taken away by the spell of Ea,[42]
Like a clove of garlic that is peeled,
Like a date that is cut in pieces,
Like a flowering branch that is broken off!
O Double of the Heaven, exorcize the magic!"

In the thick darkness, Nebuchadnezzar knew that the demons were still there; in the dreadful battle, he was given this respite, which allowed his hope to revive. Opposite him, like the symbol of that hope, a light appeared, flickered, and then shone tremulously. By the leaping fire of the portable brazier which had been brought, he could see the magician peel the clove of garlic which the god demanded, and throw it into the fire, murmuring:

" As the burning flame consumes this clove of garlic, peeled and cast in the fire,
So may Marduk, Prince of the Gods, drive the magic far from Nebuchadnezzar
And untie the bonds of the sickness which devours him,
And also of every sin, of every fault, of every frowardness, and of every crime!" [43]

In the motionless face of Nebuchadnezzar, only the eyes were still alive, in which neither will nor pride

had yet abdicated. Without a muscle quivering, in a strange, low voice which he was saving for the efforts of the morrow, he murmured:

"May the sickness which is in my body, in my flesh, and in my muscles,
Be stripped like this clove of garlic and consumed in this day by this devouring flame,
That I may see the light a long time yet."

The magician then cut a date in small pieces, and as it burned he resumed his monotonous chant:

"As the burning flame consumes this date, cut and cast in the fire,
So may Marduk, Prince of the Gods, drive the magic far away. . . ."

Nebuchadnezzar's lips moved again:

"May the sickness which is in my body be cut like this date,
That I may see the light a long time yet."

The magician went on with his rites. The fire consumed, one after another, the hair of a goat and a piece of a flowering branch. Nebuchadnezzar's voice was no more than a gasping breath, and suddenly he lost consciousness, exhausted by the furious battle which was being fought in his body between the beneficent gods and the evil demons.

But his eyes opened again, now filled with shadow. The acute pain had ceased, and he only felt an immense lassitude, as if the despair of his body were trying to conquer his soul, which still wished to struggle and win. The light in his eyes grew brighter. Was it victory? The magician chanted his invocation to the fire loudly:

"O Fire, chief motive power that breathes in the land,
Hero, Son of the Abyss!
O God of Fire, by thy sacred fire thou hast established light in the house of darkness.
It is thou who dost establish destinies,
It is thou who minglest copper and tin, melting them,

It is thou who refinest silver and gold,
It is thou who makest the wicked to tremble in the night.
It is thou!
Make the members of the man, who has again become the son of his god, to shine with purity,
Let him be pure as the sky,
Let him be shining as the earth,
Let him shine like the midst of the sky,
And let the malignant tongue which has cast a spell on him have no more hold over him!" [44]

To Nebuchadnezzar's ears, the sacred words now came as the meaningless sounds of an unknown language. His mouth, at the corner of which there was a little foam, gave no sound but an indistinct rattle. The demons were winning. Not yet! As a last hope, the room was filled with an abominable stench. The physician brought a drug, which the exorcist tried to force between the clenched teeth of the King; its smell alone was enough to rout the whole army of demons.[45] The *ashipu* cried:

"And thou, merciful Lord, who recallest the dead to life,
Dispel his malady by thy holy spell which gives life.
May the man, the son of a god, be pure, resplendent, shining——"

But he did not finish, for life was leaving the King. A little rattling, a last hiccup, and Nebuchadnezzar had lost the battle. Conquered and beaten down by the demons though he was, his ferocious will had set its imprint on his face in a last supreme effort. Thus fixed in death, he was to go for ever to the top of the Mountain of the World in the region of the Silvery Clouds.

The Royal Palace of Babylon was filled with lamentations and groaning.[46] Howlings of grief attended Queen Amytis as she left the house of her husband for ever, in accordance with custom, her lamentations broken by sobs. The officials crowded in the gates and courts, with their clothes torn in sign of mourning and gold bangles on their arms.

Evil-Merodach stood at the foot of the little bed on which the dead King lay, and gave his orders. He desired the clothes in which his father had gone to battle to be laid on the top of his body, which was arrayed in the royal robes. With his own hands he set the round feathered tiara on the head, and, while the priests spread oil and honey over the still face, and then over the whole body, he poured libations of pure water all round,[47] uttering the words prescribed by the rites:

"I have laid thee out in the royal oil in very seemly fashion.
I have brought thee pure water.
Mi-Zadim, the Chief Jeweller of Anu, has made thee ready with his holy hands;
Ea has taken thee to the place of purification,
He has laid thee out in honey and cream,
He has put water of exorcism in thy mouth,
He has opened thy mouth by exorcism.
Be pure as the heaven, be clear as the earth,
Shine as in the midst of the sky. . . ."[48]

He then spread a winding-sheet of fine linen over the body, and, while the sacrificial lamb was slain over in the third court, the priests laid the body in a small earthenware coffin roughly shaped like itself.[49] On the right and left of the body, Evil-Merodach made a point of putting in the favourite gold goblet, sword, and jewels of his father, and by his head he laid food and the terra-cotta cone which bore the funeral inscription:

"They are stayed now and for ever, they who ruled the earth, for whom there was no rival.
My God, my Lord, before the face of the Anunnakis, may I pass through the tomb!
May I seize thy hand before the Great Gods, may I hear a judgement, may I embrace thy feet!"

And, after the ritual phrase asking all who found the tomb not to disturb the dead man in his eternal sleep, the cone bore a promise:

" Thy reward in the life beyond the tomb shall be then,
When thy name shall be blessed and thy soul shall drink
pure water." [50]

Outside, the mourning-women rent their garments and tore their cheeks and breasts with their sharpened nails. Their blood flowed to the ground, where that of the sacrificial lamb still steamed, or soaked into the mud and ashes which they heaped on their heads. Their despairing howls redoubled when the coffin was lifted on to the shoulders of the Palace servants, who were followed by the train of mourning-women and musicians.[51]

In Nebuchadnezzar's favourite room, which was near the third court and had the best view over the city, the room in which he had indulged in most of his dreaming, there was a yawning hole in the corner of the walls · [52] there the King would sleep his last sleep.[53] Priests, architects, and masons crowded round Evil-Merodach in that burial-chamber; the mass of officials and servants were kept in the vestibule and the court by the King's eunuchs. The howling had ceased, and there was no sound but the dull noise of bricks being laid, and then that of the great stone being put in its place. It was closed with fastenings of bronze, and the voice of Evil-Merodach went up again: " Concerning the stone Arami, the place of his rest: I have closed the entrance with bronze, over which I have said a spell which is efficacious for preventing the return of the dead. Vases of silver and gold, all that is possible and fitting to a tomb, the adornment which his Lordship would have, I have set out before Shamash and laid in the tomb of my father who begot me." [54]

Then Evil-Merodach gave orders that in Babylon and in all the other cities the governors should call together the people and the army, that the whole Empire might mourn its sovereign. A general three days' mourning, with the customary lamentations, was

to be held, and for a month no enterprise of any kind should be undertaken.[55]

Everything was over. While Evil-Merodach withdrew in triumph amid the adulations of priests and officials, followed by a silent and thoughtful Nabonidus, Neriglissar, surrounded by the army leaders whom he knew to be devoted to his cause, could not resist casting a black glance after the feeble boy whom he would presently proclaim King and had long been thinking of murdering.

That glance did not escape the Jewish servant who was standing, half-hidden, at the back of the vestibule, behind the eunuchs. In a low voice he repeated the prophecy of Jeremiah: "Declare ye among the nations, and publish; say, Babylon is taken, Bel is confounded, Merodach is broken in pieces! Flee out of the midst of Babylon, and save every man his life! Babylon hath made all the earth drunken; the nations have drunken of her wine. We would have healed Babylon, but she is not healed; forsake her!"[56] Then, turning to the High Priest, who stood transfixed, he went on: "Thou wast my battle-axe and weapons of war; for with thee I did break in pieces the nations, and with thee did I destroy kingdoms; and with thee did I break in pieces the horse and his rider; and with thee did I break in pieces captains and rulers. And I will render unto thee all thy evil that thou hast done in Zion. Set ye up a standard in the land, blow the trumpet among the nations, prepare the nations against her! O Babylon, thou that dwellest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, and the measure of thy covetousness!"[57]

NOTES ON CHAPTER ELEVEN

[1] Jer., l, 14; li, 37.

[2] Isa., xlvii, 1–5. In reality, according to Renan (vol. iii, p. 445), the Deutero-Isaiah did not write these incomparable words until about 550, ten years after our story. He was to be the great prophet of the fall of Babylon.

[3] *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iii, pp. 221 ff.; Dougherty, *Nabonidus and Belshazzar*, pp. 138–60. Analysing the reasons which led Nabonidus to erect a second capital of the Empire at Tema, Dougherty first points to the strategic importance of the city, which to some extent commanded both Arabia and Egypt. He suggests that the mad ambitions of Nitocris, the wife of Nabonidus, and his son Belshazzar may have induced the peaceable Nabonidus to leave them in Babylon with as much power as they liked. He remarks on the commercial wealth which the very name of Tema suggested. Finally, he observes that Nabonidus was very keen on the worship of the Moon-god, Sin, of whom his mother Shumua-Damqa was still a priestess; he could indulge his liking without fear at Tema, whereas it would have been quite impossible in Babylon, because of Marduk.

[4] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 566. Evil-Merodach was murdered by Neriglissar, who ascended the throne in 560, and tried to carry on the tradition of Nebuchadnezzar, but died in 556. He was succeeded by his son Labashi-Marduk, a vicious boy, whose throat was cut after nine months. Then came the fairly glorious reign of the amiable Nabonidus, who was given to literature, art, and philanthropy. As I have said, he lived at Tema, while his wife Nitocris and his son Belshazzar were left in Babylon to misuse their power. Then Cyrus besieged Babylon, which fell in 539. Such was the end of the astonishing empire which was born of the fall of Nineveh in 612 and disappeared seventy-three years later.

[5] The strategy of this campaign of Cyrus is analysed by Billerbeck (*Geographische Untersuchungen*, pp. 13, 25), who is followed by Maspero (vol. iii, pp. 633 ff.). For later documents, see Dougherty, *Nabonidus*, pp. 167 ff. See also Hdt., i, 189.

[6] Maspero, vol. iii, p. 623.

[7] Maspero (14th ed.), p. 720. In 581 Babylon was thoroughly sacked by Xerxes, and its inhabitants were taken into bondage.

[8] Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, p. 247; Abydenos, quoting Megasthenes, who relates that Nebuchadnezzar, after doing the great things which had made his reign glorious, was suddenly filled with the divine spirit and foretold what would become of his posterity (Berosus).

[9] Amiaud, in *Journal Asiatique*, 1881, p. 126. The original meaning of the word *ekimmu* is the shade or soul of a dead man. This is proved by a remarkable phrase of Ashurbanipal: "The tombs of their kings, ancient and modern, who had not feared Ashur and Ishtar, my Lords, I overthrew, I demolished, I laid open to the light of the sun, and I took their bodies to Assyria," and then he adds: "I left their shades without sepulchre, I deprived them of the offerings of those who owed them libations."

[10] Maspero, vol. i, p. 597. The ancestors of Nebuchadnezzar were buried in the castle of the famous Shar-gani-Sharri, King of Agade, who conquered Babylon, Sippar, and Kish. We see that generations of kings were buried there after him, but this was very natural, since the dead had to be given water daily. Further on, Maspero says: "The Kings lay in the tombs of their castles. There they were worshipped as in Egypt, and so were saved from the oblivion to which the most illustrious of their subjects succumbed."

In the *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archæology*, 1874, pp. 361 ff., "On Fragments of an Inscription giving Part of the Chronology from which the Canon of Berosus was copied" (a fragment discovered by Smith), we have chronological lists of the earliest Kings of Chaldæa. On the largest fragment, col. v, which contains seven reigns out of four dynasties, we read, after the name of the first king mentioned, "The leader of the Kuabar of the Sea-land, Simmash-Shipak, son of Iriba-Sin, whose reign was prosperous and whose god made him victorious in war, he reigned seventeen years; in the *ekal* of Sargina he is buried." Then come Ea-mukin-zeri, Kashshu-nadin-akhi, Ulbar-surki-idina and Ninib-kudur-utsur, the sons of Bazi, and others whose names are missing. Descendants "of the race of Elam" are then mentioned as buried in the *ekal* of Sargina. These kings reigned in Babylon roughly from 1100 to 1050, according to G. Smith. The words *ina ekal* generally mean "in the palace", and are always followed by the word *kibiru*, meaning "buried".

[11] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, Epic of Gilgamesh, col. iii, p. 301.

[12] Dhorme, *op. cit.*

[13] *Ibid.*

[14] Babylonian legend was incapable of giving men false hopes of immortality. Only one man escaped the common lot, Uta-Napishtim, the hero of the Flood, " he who found life " and lived far away, not in heaven, but at " the mouth of the rivers ", with his wife, who was likewise immortal. But there was always a faint hope; certain gods were called Muballit-Mituti (" who makes the dead to live again ") and some, like Ninurta, were invoked with the words, " Of him who has been made to go down into the Underworld thou bringest back the body."

[15] Martin, *Textes religieux*, p. 217. Nebuchadnezzar knew that Marduk, Ea, and Nabu had power to recall to life those who had served them well on earth. He himself invoked his god as " the merciful one who is pleased to awaken the dead, the merciful one who is permitted to give back life, the lord of the pure libation which awakens the dead ". Jensen, *Die Kosmologie der Babylonier*, p. 296; *Choix de textes*, p. 71.

[16] Hosea, vi, 1–2. The resurrection is introduced here only as a comparison, but the allusion is so clear that St. Paul was able to speak of the resurrection of the dead as the confirmation of the last words of the prophet.

[17] Isa., xxvi, 19. In the prophetic style, the restoration of Israel represents the redemption of mankind, and in a more distant future, eternal life. So Delitzsch, Dillmann, and Duhm see in this passage the idea of future resurrection.

[18] Ezek., xxxvii, 4–6.

[19] The resurrection of the dead is here only a term of comparison. But if the resurrection was to represent the restoration of Israel, as a possible and certain thing, it must have been regarded as real in itself by the prophet and his hearers, for his words mean, " As surely as the dead will live at the voice of God, you will be delivered from your bondage."

In the early sacred texts of Israel there is no allusion to the resurrection of the dead. " So man lieth down and riseth not " (Job, xiv, 12). Although there was no exception to the law of " Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return " (Gen., iii, 19), yet it was possible to hope for a future resurrection in which the body would return from its state of dust to a living condition by reuniting with the immortal soul. The only evidence in favour of a belief in the resurrection is to be found in the care with which the Hebrews buried their dead. Moreover, Job himself speaks of a living avenger bearing witness in the future. There is a definite statement about the resurrection of the dead in Daniel, xii, 13.

The Persians believed in individual resurrection (Hdt., iii, 62).

[20] Dhorme, *Choix de textes* (Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld), p. 327.

[21] Dhorme, *Choix de textes* (Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld), p. 327.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] *Ibid.*; see also *op. cit.*, Introd., p. xxxiii, on the Babylonian Underworld.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[26] From a passage in the Epic of Gilgamesh, Tablet xii, col. vi.

[27] Lagrange, *Études sur les religions sémitiques*, p. 340. The Chaldæans believed that it was possible to come out of Arallu (the abode of the dead) and that their gods could bring this about. Alone with the Hebrews, they were concerned about the grave problem of resurrection. "If one thinks of the extraordinary influence exerted by Chaldæa in the religious domain, and the fairly high number of beliefs common to all Semites, one will feel some justification in including the resurrection of the body among the ideas which interested the ancient world about 2000 B.C. We do not see that a universal, hard-and-fast doctrine was established on the point. While admitting the possibility of resurrection and retaining the hope of it, the Babylonians did not make this sentiment a fundamental article of faith."

[28] Dhorme, *Choix de textes*, p. 325.

[29] "At the north-east corner" (of the Principal Citadel) "there was a great basalt figure of a lion trampling on a man who lay beneath him with his right hand on the flank of the animal and the left on his muzzle. . . . The figure is not completely carved, and is still little more than blocked out. It therefore looks more ancient than it really is, for it can scarcely be earlier than the time of Nebuchadnezzar. People are divided as to its meaning. Some see in it Daniel in the lions' den, and others Babylonia above defeated Egypt. But a concrete past is throughout this period never represented otherwise than in reliefs, and, on the other hand, it is foreign to Babylonian art to take as a basis the representation of an abstract idea" (Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 160–2).

[30] Ménant, *Babylone et la Chaldée*, p. 199; East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar.

[31] For the negative confession, see Dhorme, *La Religion*, p. 226.

[32] *Ibid.*, p. 192. Health and sickness were in the hands of the gods no less than life and death. Just as you prayed for a speedy death for your offender, you asked the gods to inflict horrible maladies on him. Hammurabi exclaimed: "May Ninkarrak send into his members a grave malady, a bad fever, a dangerous wound which cannot be healed, whose nature the physician does not know, which cannot be assuaged by a bandage, which, like

a deadly bite, cannot be taken away" (Code, obverse, xxviii, 50 ff.). On a *kudurru* (boundary-stone), Merodach-baladan says, "May Gula the Great Physician send on to the body a grievous wound without issue, a prostration from which there is no rising." Gula and Ninkarrak were goddesses of health and medicine.

Numbers of tablets (the 2nd, 3rd, and 8th in the Shurpu series) enumerate under the name of Mamit the many and various spells which a man could cast or have cast on him (Fossey, in his famous *Magie assyrienne*). See also Hunger, *Becherwahrsagung bei den Babyloniern nach den Keilschrifttexten aus der Hammurabi-Zeit.*

[33] Dhorme, *loc. cit.* (negative confession).

[34] Fossey, *op. cit.*, ch. ii, pp. 21 ff. The beneficent demons were, in addition to the gods and goddesses, the *shedu* and the *lamassu*, both represented by the winged bulls which the Assyrians set at their palace-gates. The very long list of maleficent demons is supplied by an exorcism against sacrilegious persons (Fossey, p. 26), which mentions the *utukku*, the *alu*, the *ekimmu*, the *gallu*, the *ilu*, the *labasu*, the *rabisu*, the *labartu*, the *akhazu*, the *lilu*, the *lilitu*, the *ardat lili*, the *namtaru*, and the *ashakku*, and each of these names represents a species, not an individual demon.

[35] Fossey, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 22, 5th tablet in the Shurpu series, 12–24.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 31.

[38] Scheil, "Pronostics médicaux", in *Rev. d'Assyr.*, xvi (tablet from the school of Erech).

[39] Perrot and Chipiez, *Histoire de l'art*, vol. ii, pp. 362–7.

[40] Fossey, pp. 33–4.

[41] First tablet of the Maklu series; Fossey, p. 103.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[43] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

[44] Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 251.

[45] The Germans call this branch of Babylonian medicine *Dreckapotheke*. To judge from the texts quoted by Jastrow (*The Medicine of the Babylonians and Assyrians*, pp. 9, 50), this treatment, which was also used in the Middle Ages, gave rise to some remarkable prescriptions. Chicory was mixed with a green frog, the claw of a black dog, earth taken from the "outer gate", and pig's fat; pig's tail was mixed with dust from human feet, snake's grease, and human excrement, urine, and bones. Jastrow thinks that the object was to disgust the demons, and he compares these cuneiform prescriptions with that of Macbeth's witches. One of these tablets is represented on his p. 53.

[46] The Babylonian texts speak of funeral wailings (*na-u-a*) and the use of musical instruments, including the flute, at funerals.

They mention mourning men and women (Descent of Ishtar, obverse, i, 56–8). In the account of a funeral we find, "The wives lamented, the friends responded" (Alf. Jeremias, *Hölle und Paradies*, 1112).

[47] These libations were offered by a special class of priests called *naq-me*, "water-spreaders". A mutilated text describes a priest going into a tomb and causing a servant to set cooked meat and wine before the dead man. To be deprived of these offerings was a great misfortune for the dead.

[48] Scheil, *Textes funéraires*, K.7856, col. i, 4.

[49] In the time of Hammurabi and his predecessors and successors, there were no sarcophagi. "The bodies either lay simply in the earth, or at most were rolled in reed mats or were roughly surrounded by mud bricks. . . . At 3 metres above zero, the high pottery coffins begin, which are shown by isolated finds in the Southern Citadel to belong undoubtedly to the time of Nebuchadnezzar or earlier. On the side where the head lay they are angular, the other side is rounded. The body lies crouched in them, or slightly on one side" (Koldewey, *Excavations*, pp. 273–5).

[50] Scheil, funerary text, in *Revue d'Assyr.*, xiii, No. 4, p. 165.

[51] Maspero, *Lectures historiques*, p. 255.

[52] We may hope one day to find the great king's sarcophagus in the walls of the Citadel.

[53] Maspero, *Histoire*, vol. ii, p. 635. There were no monumental rock-tombs, mastabas, or pyramids for the dead of Babylonia, for their bodies soon decomposed in the alluvial soil on which their cities were built. No painting was possible, for the same reason. The Chaldæan's "House of Eternity" was made of baked or unbaked bricks, and the form varies. Sometimes it is a large chamber with a corbelled vault in which one or two bodies were buried together; that at Mughair is roughly 6 feet 6 inches long, 5 feet 6 inches high, and 3 feet 6 inches broad, the walls not being straight. These tombs were crowded together and were soon covered by sand or rubbish, and other tombs were afterwards made on the top of them.

Only kings were buried in their own palaces; this had been so since the time of Ninus, the mythical founder of Nineveh and the Assyrian Empire. The Babylonian chronicles carefully mention, after the name of each king, that of the palace where he was buried, Sargina.

[54] Scheil, on funerary texts, K.7856, in *Recueil de travaux*, xviii, 65 ff.

[55] From the Nabonidus Chronicle we know that when Nabonidus's mother died on the 5th of Nisan, her son and the troops kept a three days' mourning, and lamentations were con-

ducted all over the country. The same chronicle leads one to suppose that there was general mourning all through the month of Siwan in the same year. The Eski-Harran inscription (col. iii, l. 19), speaking of the mourning of Nabonidus for his mother, states that after the customary ceremonies the people of Babylon and Borsippa were assembled by Nabonidus to participate in the respect paid to his deceased parent. There were two periods of mourning, with an interval of seven and a half weeks between.

[56] Jer., l, 2; li, 6 ff.

[57] Jer., li.

MAP OF THE BAB

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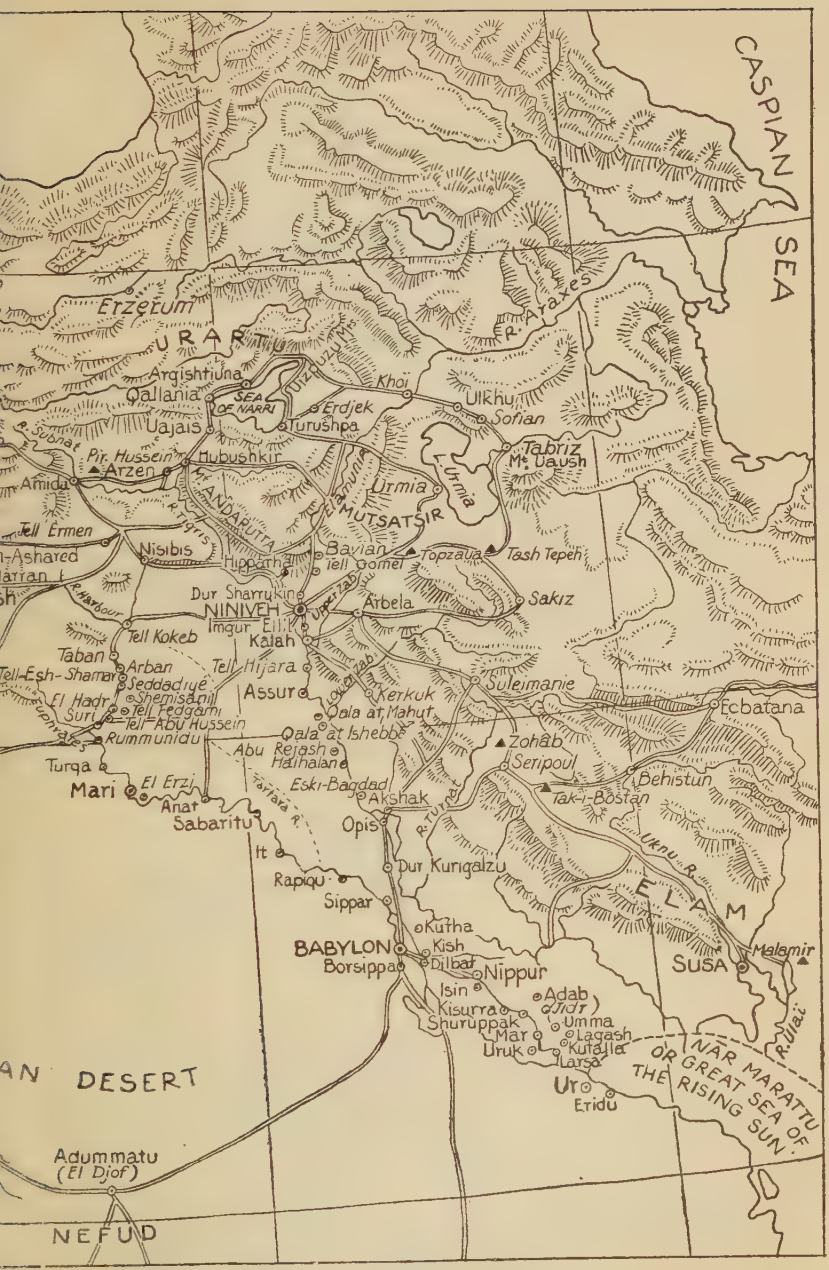

SYRIAN EMPIRES

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